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THE

HOME MISSION.

By T. S. ARTHUR.

PHILADELPHIA.
J. W. BRADLEY,
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1860.

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PREFACE.

MAIN

If it were possible to trace back to their beginnings, in each individual, those good or evil impulses that have become ruling affections, in most cases the origin would not be found until we had reached the home of childhood. Here it is that impressions are made, which become lasting as existence itself. But the influence of home is not alone salutary or baneful in early years. Wherever a home exists, there will be found the nursery of all that is excellent in social or civil life, or of all that is deformed. Every man and woman we meet in society, exhibit, in unmistakable characters, the quality of their homes. The wife, the husband, the children, the guest, bear with them daily a portion of the spirit pervading the little circle from which they have come forth. If the sun shines there, a light will be on their countenances; but shadows, if clouds are in the sky of home. If there be disorder, defect of principle, discord among the members, neglect of duty, and absence of kind offices, the sphere of those who constitute that home can hardly

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be salutary. They will add little to the common stock of good in the social life around them. We need not say how different will be the influence of those whose home-circle is pervaded by higher, purer, and truer principles.

A word to the wise is, we are told, sufficient. He, therefore, who speaks a true word in the ear of the wise, has planted a seed that will surely spring up and yield good fruit. May we hope that all into whose hands this little book is destined to come are wise, and that the few suggestive words spoken therein, as "hints to make home happy," will fall into good ground. If this be so, "The Home Mission" will not be fruitless. Though no annual reports of what it has accomplished are made, its silent and unobtrusive work, we trust, will be none the less effectual.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE

HOME MISSION.

A VISION OF CONSOLATION.

THE tempest of grief which, for a time, had raged so wildly in the heart of Mrs. Freeland, exhausted by its own violence, sobbed itself away, and the stricken mother passed into the land of dreams.

To the afflicted, sleep comes with a double blessing —rest is given to the wearied body and to the grieving spirit. Often, very often, the Angel of Consolation bends to the dreaming ear, and whispers words of hope and comfort that from no living lips had yet found utterance.

And it was so now with the sleeping mother. A few hours only had passed since she stood looking down, for the last time, on the fair face of her youngest born. Over his bright, blue eyes, into whose heavenly depths she had so loved to gaze, the pale lids had closed for ever. Still lingered around his lips the smile left there by the angels, as, with a kiss of love, they received his parting spirit. In the curling masses of his rich, golden hair, the shadows nestled away, as of old, while his tiny fingers held a few white blossoms, as with a living grasp. Was it death or sleep? So like a sleeping child the sweet boy lay, that it seemed every mo-

ment as if his lips would unclose, his eyes open to the light, and his voice come to the listening ear with its tones of music.

If to the mother had come this illusion, it remained not long. Wild with grief, she turned away as the sweet face she had so loved to gaze upon was hidden from her straining eyes for ever.

Hidden from her eyes, did we say? Only hidden from her natural eyes. Still he was before the eyes of her spirit in all his living beauty. But, to her natural affections, he was lost—even as he had faded from before her natural eyes; and, in the agony of bereavement, it seemed that her heart would break. Back to her darkened chamber she went. Her nearest and dearest friends gathered around, seeking lovingly to sustain her in her great affliction; but she refused to be comforted.

At length, as at first said, the tempest of grief, which, for a time, raged so violently in the heart of Mrs. Freeland, sobbed itself away, and the stricken mother passed into the land of dreams.

For the most part, dreams are fantastic. Yet they are not always so. In states of deep sorrow or strong trial, when the heart turns from the natural world, hopeless of aid or consolation, truth often comes in dreams and similitudes.

The mother found herself in the company of two beautiful maidens, in the very flower of youth; and as she gazed earnestly into their faces, which seemed transparent from an inward celestial light, she saw expectation therein—loving expectation. They stood beneath the eastern portico of a pleasant dwelling, around which stately trees—the branches

vocal with the song of feathered minstrels—lifted their green tops far up into the crystal air. Flowers of a thousand hues and sweet odours were woven into forms and figures of exquisite beauty upon the carpet of living green spread over the teeming earth, while groups of little children sported one with another, and mingled their happy voices with the melody of birds.

Yet, amid all this external joy and beauty, the hand of grief still lay upon the mother's heart; and when she looked upon the sportive infants around her, she sighed for her own babe. Even as she sighed, one of the maidens turned to her and said, while her whole countenance was lit up with a glow of delight—

"It has come. A new babe is born unto heaven."

And, as she spoke, she gathered her arms quickly to her bosom, and the wondering mother saw lying thereon her own child. The other maiden was already bending over the infant—already had she greeted its coming with a kiss of love. Quickly both retired within the dwelling, and the bereaved mother went with them, eager to receive the babe she had lost.

"Oh, my child! my child!" she said. "Give me my child."

And ere the words had died upon her lips, the maiden who had received the babe gave it into her arms, when she clasped it with a wild delight, and rained tears of gladness upon its face.

For a time, the two maidens looked upon the mother in silence, and in their bright countenances love and pity were blended. At length, one of them

said to her, (and she smiled sweetly, and spoke with an exquisite, penetrating tenderness,)—

"Your heart is full of love for your babe?"

"He is dearer to me than life—dearer than a thousand lives," replied the mother quickly, drawing the babe closer to her bosom.

"Love seeks to bless the object of its regard."

There was a meaning in the words and tone of the maiden, as she said this, that caused the mother to look into her face earnestly.

"This is not the land of sickness, of sorrow, of death," resumed the maiden, "but the land of eternal life and blessedness. Into this land your babe has been born. You are here only as a visitant, and must soon return to bear a few more trials and pains, a few more conflicts with evil; but the end is your preparation for these heavenly regions."

A shadow fell instantly upon the mother's heart. Tears rushed to her eyes, and she drew her arms more tightly about her babe.

"Shall we keep this babe in our heavenly home, or will you bear it with you back to the dark, cold, sad regions of mortality?"

"Do not take from me my more than life!" sobbed the mother wildly. "Oh! I cannot give you my child;" and more eagerly she hugged it to her breast.

For a time there was silence. Then one of the maidens laid gently her hand upon the mother, and she lifted her bowed head.

"Come," said the maiden.

The mother arose, and the two walked into the open air, and passing through the group of children

sporting on the lawn and in the gardens, went for what seemed the space of a mile, until they came to a forest, into the depths of which they penetrated; and, for a time, the farther they went the darker and more gloomy it became, until scarcely a ray of light from the arching sky came down through the dense and tangled foliage. At last they were beyond the forest.

"Look," said the companion.

The mother lifted her eyes—the babe had strangely passed from her arms. A dwelling, familiar in aspect, stood near, and through an open window she saw a sick child lying upon a bed, and knew it as her own. Its little face was distorted by pain and flushed with fever; and as it tossed restlessly to and fro, its moans filled her ears. She stretched forth her hands, yearning to give some relief; even as she did so, the scene faded from her view, and next she saw an older child, bearing still the linaments of her own. There was the same broad, white forehead and clustering curls; the same large, bright eyes and full, ruddy lips; but, alas! not the soft vail of innocence which had given the features of the babe such a heavenly charm. The fine brow was contracted with passion; the eyes flashed with an evil light; and the lips were tightly drawn, and with something of defiance, against the teeth. The boy was resisting, with a stern determination, the will of the parents—was setting at naught those early salutary restraints which are the safeguard of youth.

"Oh! my unhappy boy!" cried the mother.

The scene changed as she spoke. The boy, now

grown up to manhood, once more stood before her. Alas! how had the light of innocence faded from his countenance, giving place to a shadow of evil, the very darkness of which caused a cold shudder to pass through the mother's frame.

"Look again," said the maiden, as this scene was fading.

But the mother hid her face in her hands, and turned weeping away.

"Look again." And this time there was something so heart-cheering in the maiden's voice, that the mother lifted her tearful eyes. She was back again in the beautiful place from which she had gone forth a little while before, and her babe, beautiful as innocence itself, lay sweetly sleeping in the arms of the lovely maiden who had received it on its first entrance into heaven. With a heart full of joy, the mother now bent over the slumbering babe, kissing it again and again.

"Grieving mother," said the angel-maiden, in tones of flute-like softness, "God saw that it would not be good for your child to remain on earth, and he therefore removed it to this celestial region, where no evil can ever penetrate. To me, as an angel-mother, it has been given; and I will love it and care for it with a love as pure and tender as the love that yearns in your bosom. As its infantile mind opens, I will pour in heavenly instruction, that it may grow in wisdom and become an angel. Will you not let me have it freely?"

"But why may I not remain here and be its heavenly mother? Oh! I will love and care for it

with a tenderness and devotion equal to, if not exceeding yours."

Even while the mother spoke there was a change. She saw before her other objects of affection. There was her husband, sitting in deep dejection, sorrowing for the loss of one who was dear as his own life; while three children, the sight of whom stirred her maternal heart to its profoundest depths, lay sleeping in each other's arms, the undried tears yet glistening on their lashes.

The wife and mother stretched forth her hands toward these beloved ones, eager to be with them again and turn their grief into gladness. But, in a moment, there passed another change. The pleasant home in which her children had been sheltered for years, no longer held them; the fold had been broken up and the tender lambs scattered. One of these little ones the mother saw, sitting apart from a group of sportive children, weeping over some task work. The bloom on her cheek had faded—its roundness was gone—the light of her beautiful eyes was quenched in tears. And, as she looked, a woman came to the child and spoke to her harshly. She was about springing forward, when another scene was presented. Her first-born, a noble-spirited boy, to whose future she had ever looked with pride and pleasure, stood before her. Alas! how changed. Every thing about him showed the want of a mother's care and considerate affection; and from his dear, young face had already vanished the look of joyous innocence she had so loved to contemplate.

Again the mother was in the presence of the angel-maiden, to whose loving arms a good God had

confided the babe, which, in his wisdom, he had removed from the earth. And the angel-maiden, as she looked first at the babe in her arms and then at the mother, smiled sweetly and said—

"He is safe here; will you not let him remain?"

And, with a gushing heart, the mother answered, "Not for worlds would I take him with me into the outer life of nature. Oh, no! He is safe—let him remain."

"And you will return to those who still need your love and care?"

"Yes, yes," said the mother, earnestly. "Let me go to them again. Let me be their angel on earth."

And she bent hastily to the heaven-born babe, kissing it with tearful fondness.

There came now another change. The mother was back again in her chamber of sorrow; and undried tears were yet upon her cheeks. But she was comforted and reconciled to the great affliction which had been sent for good from heaven.

Those who saw Mrs. Freeland in the first wild grief that followed the loss of her babe, wondered at her serene composure when she came again among them. And they wondered long, for she spoke not of this Vision of Consolation. It was too sacred a thing to be revealed, to any save the companion of her life.

THE STEP-MOTHER

THERE are few positions in social life of greater trial and responsibility than that of a step-mother; and it too rarely happens that the woman who assumes this position, is fitted for the right discharge of its duties. In far too many cases, the widower is accepted as a husband because he has a home, or a position to offer, while the children are considered as a drawback in the bargain. But it sometimes happens, that a true woman, from genuine affection, unites herself with a widower, and does it with a loving regard for his children, and with the purpose in her mind of being to them, as far as in her power lies, a wise and tender mother.

Such a woman was Agnes Green. She was in her thirty-second year when Mr. Edward Arnold, a widower with four children, asked her to become his wife. At twenty-two, Agnes had loved as only a true woman can love. But the object of that love proved himself unworthy, and she turned away from him. None knew how deep the heart-trial through which she passed—none knew how intensely she suffered. In part, her pale face and sobered brow witnessed, but only in part; for many said she was cold, and some even used the word heartless, when they spoke of her. From early womanhood a beauti-

ful ideal of manly excellence had filled her mind; and with this ideal she had invested one who proved false to the high character. At once the green things of her heart withered, and for a long time its surface was a barren waste. But the woman was yet strong in her. She must love something. So she came forth from her heart-seclusion, and let her affections, like a refreshing and invigorating stream, flow along many channels. She was the faithful friend, the comforter in affliction, the wise counsellor. More than once had she been approached with offers of marriage, by men who saw the excellence of her character, and felt that upon any dwelling, in which she was the presiding spirit, would rest a blessing. But none of them were able to give to the even pulses of her heart a quicker motion.

At last she met Mr. Arnold. More than three years had passed since the mother of his children was removed by death, and, since that time, he had sought, with all a father's tenderness and devotion, to fill her place to them. How imperfectly, none knew so well as himself. As time went on, the want of a true woman's affectionate care for his children was more and more felt. All were girls except the youngest, their ages ranging from twelve downward, and this made their mother's loss so much the more a calamity. Moreover, his feeling of loneliness and want of companionship, so keenly felt in the beginning, instead of diminishing, increased.

Such was his state of mind when he met Agnes Green. The attraction was mutual, though, at first, no thought of marriage came into the mind of either. A second meeting stirred the placid waters in the

bosom of Agnes Green. Conscious of this, and fearful lest the emotion she strove to repress might become apparent to other eyes, she assumed a certain reserve, not seen in the beginning, which only betrayed her secret, and at once interested Mr. Arnold, who now commenced a close observation of her character. With every new aspect in which this was presented, he saw something that awakened admiration; something that drew his spirit nearer to her as one congenial. And not the less close was her observation.

When, at length, Mr. Arnold solicited the hand of Agnes Green, she was ready to respond. Not, however, in a selfish and self-seeking spirit; not in the narrow hope of obtaining some great good for herself, was her response made, but in full view of her woman's power to bless, and with an earnest, holy purpose in her heart, to make her presence in his household indeed a blessing.

"I must know your children better than I know them now, and they must know me better than they do, before I take the place you wish me to assume," was her reply to Mr. Arnold, when he spoke of an early marriage.

And so means were taken to bring her in frequent contact with the children. The first time she met them intimately, was at the house of a friend. Mary, the oldest girl, she found passionate and self-willed; Florence, the second, good-natured, but careless and slovenly; while Margaret, the third, was in ill health, and exceedingly peevish. The little brother, Willy, was a beautiful, affectionate child, but in consequence of injudicious management, very

badly spoiled. Take them altogether, they presented rather an unpromising aspect; and it is no wonder that Agnes Green had many misgivings at heart, when the new relation contemplated, and its trials and responsibilities, were pictured to her mind.

The earnestly-asked question by Mr. Arnold, after this first interview,—"What do you think of my children?"—was not an easy one to answer. A selfish, unscrupulous woman, who looked to the connection as something to be particularly desired on her own account, and who cared little about duties and responsibilities, might have replied, "Oh, they are lovely children!" or, "I am delighted with them!" Not so Agnes Green. She did not reply immediately, but mused for some moments, considerably embarrassed, and in doubt what to say. Mr. Arnold was gazing intently in her face.

"They do not seem to have made a favourable impression," said he, speaking with some disappointment in his tone and manner.

A feeble flush was visible in the face of Agnes Green, and also a slight quiver of the lips as she answered:

"There is too much at stake, as well in your case as my own, to warrant even a shadow of concealment. You ask what I think of your children, and you expect me to answer truly?"

"I do," was the almost solemnly-spoken reply.

"My first hurried, yet tolerably close, observation, has shown me, in each, a groundwork of natural good."

"As their father," replied Mr. Arnold, in some

earnestness of manner, "I know there is good in them,—much good. But they have needed a mother's care."

"When you have said that, how much has been expressed! If the garden is not cultivated, and every weed carefully removed, how quickly is it overrun with things noxious, and how feeble becomes the growth of all things good and beautiful! It is just so with the mind. Neglect it, and bad habits and evil propensities will assuredly be quickened into being, and attain vigorous life."

"My children are not perfect, I know, but—"

Mr. Arnold seemed slightly hurt. Agnes Green interrupted him, by saying, in a mild voice, as she laid her hand gently upon his arm:

"Do not give my words a meaning beyond what they are designed to convey. If I assume the place of a mother to your children, I take upon myself all the responsibilities that the word 'mother' involves. Is not this so?"

"Thus I understand it.'

"My duty will be, not only to train these children for a happy and useful life here, but for a happy and useful life hereafter."

"It will."

"It is no light thing, Mr. Arnold, to assume the place of a mother to children who, for three years, have not known a mother's affectionate care. I confess that my heart shrinks from the responsibility, and I ask myself over and over again, 'Have I the requisite wisdom, patience, and self-denial?'"

"I believe you have," said Mr. Arnold, who was beginning to see more deeply into the heart of

Agnes. "And now," he added, "tell me what you think of my children."

"Mary has a quick temper, and is rather self-willed, if my observation is correct, but she has a warm heart. Florence is thoughtless, and untidy in her person, but possesses a happy temper. Poor Maggy's ill health has, very naturally, soured her disposition. Ah, what can you expect of a suffering child, who has no mother? Your little Willy is a lovely boy, somewhat spoiled—who can wonder at this?—but possessing just the qualities to win for him kindness from every one."

"I am sure you will love him," said Mr. Arnold, warmly.

"I have no doubt on that subject," replied Agnes Green. "And now," she added, "after what I have said, after showing you that I am quick to see faults, once more give this matter earnest consideration. If I become your wife, and take the place of a mother to these children, I shall, at once,—wisely and lovingly, I trust,—begin the work of removing from their minds every noxious weed that neglect may have suffered to grow there. The task will be no light one, and, in the beginning, there may be rebellion against my authority. To be harsh or hard is not in my nature. But a sense of duty will make me firm. Once more, I say, give this matter serious consideration. It is not yet too late to pause."

Mr. Arnold bent his head in deep reflection. For many minutes he sat in silent self-communion, and sat thus so long, that the heart of Agnes Green began to beat with a restricted motion, as if there

was a heavy pressure on her bosom. At last Mr. Arnold looked up, his eyes suddenly brightening, and his face flushing with animation. Grasping her hands with both of his, he said:

"I have reflected, Agnes, and I do not hesitate. Yes, I will trust these dear ones to your loving guardianship. I will place in your hands their present and eternal welfare, confident that you will be to them a true mother."

And she was. As often as it could be done before the time appointed for the marriage, she was brought in contact with the children. Almost from the beginning, she was sorry to find in Mary, the oldest child, a reserve of manner, and an evident dislike toward her, which she in vain sought to overcome. The groundwork of this she did not know. It had its origin in a remark made by the housekeeper, who, having learned from some gossipping relative of Mr. Arnold that a new wife was soon to be brought home, and, also, who this new wife was to be, made an imprudent allusion to the fact, in a moment of forgetfulness.

"Your new mother will soon put you straight, my little lady," said she, one day, to Mary, who had tried her beyond all patience.

"My new mother! Who's she, pray?" was sharply demanded.

"Miss Green," replied the unreflecting housekeeper. "Your father's going to bring her home one of these days, and make her your mother, and she'll put you all right—she'll take down your fine airs, my lady!"

"Will she?" And Mary, compressing her lips

tightly, and drawing up her slender form to its full height, looked the image of defiance.

From that moment a strong dislike toward Miss Green ruled in the mind of Mary; and she resolved, should the housekeeper's assertion prove true, not only to set the new authority at defiance, but to inspire, if possible, the other children with her own feelings.

The marriage was celebrated at the house of Mr. Arnold, in the presence of his own family and a few particular friends, Agnes arriving at the hour appointed.

After the ceremony, the children were brought forward, and presented to their new mother. The youngest, as if strongly drawn by invisible chords of affection, sprung into her lap, and clasped his little arms lovingly about her neck. He seemed very happy. The others were cold and distant, while Mary fixed her eyes upon the wife of her father, with a look so full of dislike and rebellion, that no one present was in any doubt as to how she regarded the new order of things.

Mr. Arnold was a good deal fretted by this unexpected conduct on the part of Mary; and, forgetful of the occasion and its claims, spoke to her with some sternness. He was recalled to self-possession by the smile of his wife, and her gently-uttered remark, that reached only his own ear:

"Don't seem to notice it. Let it be my task to overcome prejudices."

During the evening Mary did not soften in the least toward her step-mother. On the next morning, when all met, for the first time, at the breakfast table, the children gazed askance at the calm, digni-

fied woman who presided at the table, and seemed ill at ease. On Mary's lip, and in her eye, was an expression so like contempt, that it was with difficulty her father could refrain from ordering her to her own room.

The meal passed in some embarrassment. At its conclusion, Mr. Arnold went into the parlour, and his wife, entering at once upon her duties, accompanied the children to the nursery, to see for herself that the two oldest were properly dressed for school. Mary, who had preceded the rest, was already in contention with the housekeeper. Just as Mrs. Arnold—so we must now call her—entered the room, Mary exclaimed, sharply:

"I don't care what you say, I'm going to wear this bonnet!"

"What's the trouble?" inquired Mrs. Arnold, calmly.

"Why, you see, ma'am," replied the housekeeper, "Mary is bent on wearing her new, pink bonnet to school, and I tell her she mustn't do it. Her old one is good enough."

"Let me see the old one," said Mrs. Arnold. She spoke in a very pleasant tone of voice.

A neat, straw bonnet, with plain, unsoiled trimming, was brought forth by the housekeeper, who remarked:

"It's good enough to wear Sundays, for that matter."

"I don't care if it is, I'm not going to wear it today. So don't bother yourself any more about it."

"Oh, yes, Mary, you will," said Mrs. Arnold, very kindly, yet firmly.

"No, I won't!" was the quick, resolute answer. And she gazed, unflinchingly, into the face of her step-mother.

"I'll call your father, my young lady! This is beyond all endurance!" said the housekeeper, starting for the door.

"Hannah!" The mild, even voice of Mrs. Arnold checked the excited housekeeper. "Don't speak of it to her father,—I'm sure she doesn't mean what she says. She'll think better of it in a moment."

Mary was hardly prepared for this. Even while she stood with unchanged exterior, she felt grateful to her step-mother for intercepting the complaint about to be made to her father. She expected some remark or remonstrance from Mrs. Arnold. But in this she was mistaken. The latter, as if nothing unpleasant had occurred, turned to Florence, and after a light examination of her dress, said to the housekeeper:

"This collar is too much soiled; won't you bring me another?"

"Oh, it's clean enough," replied Florence, knitting her brows, and affecting impatience. But, even as she spoke, the quick, yet gentle hands of her step-mother had removed the collar from her neck.

"Do you think it clean enough now?" said she, as she placed the soiled collar beside a fresh one, which the housekeeper had brought.

"It *is* rather dirty," replied Florence, smiling.

And now Mrs. Arnold examined other articles of her dress, and had them changed, re-arranged her hair, and saw that her teeth were properly brushed. While this was progressing, Mary stood a little apart,

a close observer of all that passed. One thing she did not fail to remark, and that was the gentle firmness of her step-mother, which was in strong contrast with the usual scolding, jerking, and impatience of the housekeeper, as manifested on these occasions.

By the time Florence was ready for school, Mary's state of mind had undergone considerable change, and she half regretted the exhibition of ill temper and insulting disobedience she had shown. Yet was she in no way prepared to yield. To her surprise, after Florence was all ready, her step-mother turned to her and said, in a mild, cheerful voice, as if nothing unpleasant had occurred,

"Have you a particular reason for wishing to wear your new bonnet, this morning, Mary?"

"Yes, ma'am, I have." The voice of Mary was changed considerably, and her eyes fell beneath the mild, but penetrating, gaze of her step-mother.

"May I ask you the reason?"

There was a pause of some moments; then Mary replied:

"I promised one of the girls that I'd wear it. She asked me to. She wanted to see it."

"Did you tell Hannah this?"

"No, ma'am. It wouldn't have been any use. She never hears to reason."

"But you'll find me very different, Mary," said Mrs. Arnold, tenderly. "I shall ever be ready to hear reason."

All this was so far from what Mary had anticipated, that her mind was half bewildered. Her step-mother's clear sight penetrated to her very thoughts.

Taking her hand, she drew her gently to her side. An arm was then placed lovingly around her.

"My dear child,"—it would have been a hard heart, indeed, that could have resisted the influence of that voice,—"let us understand each other in the beginning. You seem to look upon me as an enemy, and yet I wish to be the very best friend you have in the world. I have come here, not as an exacting and overbearing tyrant, but to seek your good and promote your happiness in every possible way. I will love you; and may I not expect love in return? Surely you will not withhold that."

As Mrs. Arnold spoke thus, she felt a slight quiver in the hand she had taken in her own. She continued:

"I cannot hope to fill the place of your dear mother, now in heaven. Yet even as she loved you, would I love you, my child." The voice of Mrs. Arnold had become unsteady, through excess of feeling. "As she bore with your faults, I will bear with them; as she rejoiced over every good affection born in your heart, so will I rejoice."

Outraged by the conduct of Mary, the housekeeper had gone to Mr. Arnold, whom she found in the parlour, and repeated to him, with a colouring of her own, the insolent language his child had used. The father hurried up stairs in a state of angry excitement. No little surprised was he, on entering the nursery, to see Mary sobbing on the breast of her step-mother, whose gentle hands were softly pressed upon the child's temples, and whose low, soothing voice was speaking to her words of comfort for the present, and cheerful hope for the future.

Unobserved by either, Mr. Arnold stood for a moment, and then softly retired, with a gush of thankfulness in his heart, that he had found for his children so true and good a mother.

With Mary there was no more trouble. From that hour, she came wholly under the influence of her step-mother, learning day by day, as she knew her better, to love her with a more confiding tenderness. Wonderful was the change produced on the children of Mr. Arnold, in a single year. They had, indeed, found a mother.

It is painful to think how different would have been the result, had the step-mother not been a true woman. Wise and good she was in her sphere loving and unselfish; and the fruit of her hand was sweet to the taste, and beautiful to look upon.

How few are like her! How few who assume the position of step-mother,—a position requiring patience, long-suffering, and unflinching self-denial,—are fitted for the duties they so lightly take upon themselves! Is it any wonder their own lives are made, at times, miserable, or that they mar, by passion or exacting tyranny, the fair face of humanity, in the children committed to their care? Such lose their reward.

POWER OF KINDNESS.

"Tom! Here!" said a father to his boy, speaking in tones of authority.

The lad was at play. He looked toward his father, but did not leave his companions.

"Do you hear me, sir?" spoke the father, more sternly than at first.

With an unhappy face and reluctant step, the boy left his play and approached his parent.

"Why do you creep along at a snail's pace?" said the latter, angrily. "Come quickly, I want you. When I speak, I look to be obeyed instantly. Here, take this note to Mr. Smith, and see that you don't go to sleep by the way. Now run as fast as you can go."

The boy took the note. There was a cloud upon his brow. He moved away, but at a slow pace.

"You, Tom! Is that doing as I ordered? Is that going quickly?" called the father, when he saw the boy creeping away. "If you are not back in half an hour, I will punish you."

But the words had but little effect. The boy's feelings were hurt by the unkindness of the parent. He experienced a sense of injustice; a consciousness that wrong had been done him. By nature he was

like his father, proud and stubborn; and these qualities of his mind were aroused, and he indulged in them, fearless of consequences.

"I never saw such a boy," said the father, speaking to a friend who had observed the occurrence. "My words scarcely make an impression on him."

"Kind words often prove most powerful," said the friend. The father looked surprised.

"Kind words," continued the friend, "are like the gentle rain and the refreshing dews; but harsh words bend and break like the angry tempest. The first develop and strengthen good affections, while the others sweep over the heart in devastation, and mar and deform all they touch. Try him with kind words; they will prove a hundred fold more powerful."

The latter seemed hurt by the reproof; but it left him thoughtful. An hour passed away ere his boy returned. At times during his absence he was angry at the delay, and meditated the infliction of punishment. But the words of remonstrance were in his ears, and he resolved to obey them. At last the lad came slowly in with a cloudy countenance, and reported the result of his errand. Having stayed far beyond his time, he looked for punishment, and was prepared to receive it with an angry defiance. To his surprise, after delivering the message he had brought, his father, instead of angry reproof and punishment, said kindly, "Very well, my son; you can go out to play again."

The boy went out, but was not happy. He had disobeyed and disobliged his father, and the thought of this troubled him. Harsh words had not clouded

his mind nor aroused a spirit of reckless anger. Instead of joining his companions, he went and sat down by himself, grieving over his act of disobedience. As he thus sat, he heard his name called. He listened.

"Thomas, my son," said his father, kindly. The boy sprang to his feet, and was almost instantly beside his parent.

"Did you call, father?"

"I did, my son. Will you take this package to Mr. Long for me?"

There was no hesitation in the boy's manner. He looked pleased at the thought of doing his father a service, and reached out his hand for the package. On receiving it, he bounded away with a light step.

"There is a power in kindness," said the father, as he sat musing, after the lad's departure. And even while he sat musing over the incident, the boy came back with a cheerful, happy face, and said—

"Can I do any thing else for you, father?"

Yes, there is the power of kindness. The tempest of passion can only subdue, constrain, and break; but in love and gentleness there is the power of the summer rain, the dew, and the sunshine.

BEAR AND FORBEAR.

"Don't talk to me in such a serious strain, Aunt Hannah. One would really think, from what you say, that James and I would quarrel before we were married a month."

"Not so soon as that, Maggy dear. Heaven grant that it may not come so soon as that! But, depend upon it, child, if you do not make 'bear and forbear' your motto, many months will not have passed, after your wedding-day, without the occurrence of some serious misunderstanding between you and your husband."

"If anybody else were to say that to me, Aunt Hannah, I would be very angry."

"For which you would be a very foolish girl. But it is generally the way that good advice is taken, it being an article of which none think they stand in need."

"But what in the world can there be for James and I to have differences about? I am sure that I love him most truly; and I am sure he loves me as fondly as I love him. In mutual love there can be no strife—no emulation, except in the performance of good offices. Indeed, aunt, I think you are far too serious."

"Over the bright sky bending above you, my dear niece, I would not, for the world, bring a cloud

even as light as the filmy, almost viewless gossamer. But I know that clouds must hide its clear, calm, passionless blue, either earlier or later in life. And what I say now, is with the hope of giving you the prescience required to avoid some of the storms that may threaten to break upon your head."

"Neither cloud nor storm will ever come from that quarter of the sky from which you seem to apprehend danger."

"Not if both you and James learn to bear and forbear in your conduct toward each other."

"We cannot act otherwise."

"Then there will be no danger."

Margaret Percival expressed herself sincerely. She could not believe that there was the slightest danger of a misunderstanding ever occurring between her and James Canning, to whom she was shortly to be married. The well-meant warning of her aunt, who had seen and felt more in life than she yet had, went therefore for nothing.

A month elapsed, and the young and lovely Maggy pledged her faith at the altar. As the bride of Canning, she felt that she was the happiest creature in the world. Before her was a path winding amid green and flowery places, and lingering by the side of still waters; while a sunny sky bent over all.

James Canning was a young lawyer of some talent, and the possessor of a good income independent of his profession. Like others, he had his excellencies and his defects of character. Naturally, he was of a proud, impatient spirit, and, from a child, had been restless under dictation. As an

offset to this, he was a man of strict integrity, generous in his feelings, and possessed of a warm heart. Aunt Hannah had known him since he was a boy, and understood his character thoroughly; and it was this knowledge that caused her to feel some concern for the future happiness of her niece, as well as to speak to her timely words of caution. But these words were not understood.

"We've not quarrelled yet, Aunt Hannah, for all your fears," said the young wife, three or four months after her marriage.

"For which I am truly thankful," replied Aunt Hannah. "Still, I would say now, as I did before, 'Bear and forbear.'"

"That is, I must BEAR every thing and FORBEAR in every thing. I hardly think that just, aunt. I should say that James ought to do a little of this as well as me."

"Yes, it is his duty as well as yours. But you should not think of his duty to you, Maggy, only of your duty to him. That is the most dangerous error into which you can fall, and one that will be almost certain to produce unhappiness."

"Would you have a wife never think of herself?"

"The less she thinks of herself, perhaps, the better; for the more she thinks of herself. the more she will love herself. But the more she thinks of her husband, the more she will love him and seek to make him happy. The natural result of this will be, that her husband will feel the warmth and perceive the unselfishness of her love; this will cause him to lean toward her with still greater tenderness,

and prompt him to yield to her what otherwise he might have claimed for himself."

"Then it is the wife who must act the generous, self-sacrificing part?"

"If I could speak as freely to James as I can speak to you, Maggy, I should not fail to point out his duty of bearing and forbearing, as plainly as I point out yours. All should be mutual, of course. But this can never be, if one waits for the other. If you see your duty, it is for you to do it, even if he should fail in his part.

"I don't know about that, aunt. I think, as you said just now, that all this is mutual."

"I am sorry you cannot or will not understand me, Maggy," replied Aunt Hannah.

"I am sorry too, aunt; but I certainly do not. However, don't, pray, give yourself any serious concern about James and me. I assure you that we are getting along exceedingly well; and why this should not continue is more than I can make out."

"Well, dear, I trust that it may. There is no good reason why it should not. You both have virtues enough to counterbalance all defects of character."

On the evening of that very day, as the young couple sat at the tea-table, James Canning said, as his wife felt, rather unkindly, at the same time that there was a slight contraction of his brow—

"You seem to be very much afraid of your sugar, Maggy. I never get a cup of tea or coffee sweet enough for my taste."

"You must have a sweet palate. I am sure it is like syrup, for I put in several large lumps of sugar,"

replied Margaret, speaking in a slightly offended tone.

"Taste it, will you?" said Canning, pushing his cup across the table with an impatient air.

Margaret sipped a little from the spoon, and then, with an expression of disgust in her face, said—

"Pah! I'd as lief drink so much molasses. But here's the sugar bowl. Sweeten it to your taste."

Canning helped himself to more sugar. As he did so his wife noticed that his hand slightly trembled, and also tnat his brow was drawn down, and his lips more arched than usual.

"It's a little matter to get angry about," she thought to herself. "Things are coming to a pretty pass, if I'm not to be allowed to speak."

The meal was finished in silence. Margaret felt in no humour to break the oppressive reserve, although she would have been glad, indeed, to have heard a pleasant word from the lips of her husband. As for Canning, he permitted himself to brood over the words and manner of his wife, until he became exceedingly fretted. They were so unkind and so uncalled for. The evening passed unsocially. But morning found them both in a better state of mind. Sleep has a wonderful power in restoring to the mind its lost balance, and in calming down our blinding passions. During the day, our thoughts and feelings, according with our natural state, are more or less marked by the disturbances that selfish purposes ever bring; but in sleep, while the mind rests and our governing ends lie dormant, we come into purer spiritual associations, and the soul, as well as the body, receives a healthier tone.

The morning, therefore, found Canning and his wife in better states of mind. They were as kind and as affectionate as usual in their words and conduct, although, when they sat down to the breakfast table, they each experienced a slight feeling of coldness on being reminded, too sensibly, of the unpleasant occurrence of the previous evening. Margaret thought she would be sure to please her husband in his coffee, and therefore put into his cup an extra quantity of sugar, making it so very sweet that he could with difficulty swallow it. But a too vivid recollection of what had taken place on the night before, caused him to be silent about it. The second cup was still sweeter. Canning managed to sip about one-third of this, but his stomach refused to take any more. Noticing that her husband's coffee, an article of which he was very fond, stood, nearly cup-full, beside his plate, after he had finished his breakfast, Margaret said—

"Didn't your coffee suit you?"

"It was very good; only a little too sweet."

"Then why didn't you say so?" she returned, in a tone that showed her to be hurt at this reaction upon what she had said on the previous evening. "Give me your cup, and let me pour you out some more."

"No, I thank you, Margaret, I don't care about any more."

"Yes, you do. Come, give me your cup. I shall be hurt if you don't. I'm sure there is no necessity for drinking the coffee, if not to your taste. I don't know what's come over you, James."

"And I'm sure I don't know what's come over

you," Canning thought, but did not say. He handed up his cup, as his wife desired. After filling it with coffee, she handed it back, and then reached him the sugar and cream.

"Sweeten it to your own taste," she said, a little fretfully; "I'm sure I tried to make it right."

Canning did as he was desired, and then drank the coffee, but it was with the utmost difficulty that he could do so.

This was the first little cloud that darkened the sky of their wedded life; and it did not fairly pass away for nearly a week. Nor then did the days seem as bright as before. The cause was slight—very slight—but how small a thing will sometimes make the heart unhappy. How trifling are the occurrences upon which we often lay, as upon a foundation, a superstructure of misery! Had the earnestly urged precept of Aunt Hannah been regarded, —had the lesson—"Bear and Forbear," been well learned and understood by Margaret, this cloud had never dimmed the sun of their early love. A pleasant word, in answer to her husband's momentary impatience, would have made him sensible that he had not spoken with propriety, and caused him to be more careful in future. As it was, both were more circumspect, but it was from pride instead of love, —and more to protect self than from a tender regard for each other.

Only a month or two passed before there was another slight collision. It made them both more unhappy than they were before. But the breach was quickly healed. Still scars remained, and there were times when the blood flowed into these cica-

trices so feverishly as to cause pain. Alas! wounds of the spirit do not close any more perfectly than do wounds of the body—the scars remain forever.

And thus the weeks and months went by. Neither of the married partners had learned the true secret of happiness in their holy relation,—neither of them felt the absolute necessity of bearing and forbearing. Little inequalities of character, instead of being smoothed off by gentle contact, were suffered to strike against each other, and produce, sometimes, deep and painful wounds—healing, too often, imperfectly; and too often remaining as festering sores.

And yet Canning and his wife loved each other tenderly, and felt, most of their time, that they were very happy. There were little things in each that each wished the other would correct, but neither felt the necessity of self-correction.

The birth of a child drew them together at a time when there was some danger of a serious rupture. Dear little Lilian, or "Lilly," as she was called, was a chord of love to bind them in a closer union.

"I love you more than ever, Maggy," Canning could not help saying to his wife, as he kissed first her lips and then the soft cheek of his child, a month after the babe was born.

"And I am sure I love you better than I did, if that were possible," returned Margaret, looking into her husband's face with a glance of deep affection.

As the babe grew older the parent's love for it continued to increase, and, with this increase, their happiness. The chord which had several times

jarred harshly between them, slept in profound peace.

But, after this sweet calm, the surface of their feelings became again ruffled. One little incongruity of character after another showed itself in both, and there was no genuine spirit of forbearance in either of them to meet and neutralize any sudden effervescence of the mind. Lilly was not a year old, before they had a serious misunderstanding that made them both unhappy for weeks. It had its origin in a mere trifle, as such things usually have. They had been taking tea and spending an evening with a friend, a widow lady, for whom Mrs. Canning had a particular friendship. As there was no gentleman present during the evening, the time passed rather heavily to Canning, who could not get interested in the conversation of the two ladies. Toward nine o'clock he began to feel restless and impatient, and to wonder if his wife would not soon be thinking about going home. But the time passed wearily until ten o'clock, and still the conversation between the two ladies was continued with undiminished interest, and, to all appearance, was likely to continue until midnight.

Canning at length became so restless and wearied that he said, thinking that his wife did not probably know how late it was,—

"Come, Margaret, isn't it 'most time to go home?'

Mrs. Canning merely looked into her husband's face, but made no answer.

More earnestly than ever the ladies now appeared to enter upon the various themes for conversation that presented themselves, all of which were very

frivolous to the mind of Canning, who was exceedingly chafed by his wife's indifference to his suggestion about going home. He determined, however, to say no more if she sat all night. Toward eleven o'clock she made a movement to depart, and after lingering in the parlor before she went up stairs to put on her things, and in the chamber after her things were on, and on the stairs, in the passage, and at the door, she finally took the arm of her husband and started for home. Not a word was uttered by either until they had walked the distance of two squares, when Margaret, unable to keep back what she wanted to say any longer, spoke thus,—

"James, I will thank you, another time, when we are spending an evening out, not to suggest as publicly as you did to-night that it is time to go home. It's very bad manners, let me tell you, in the first place; and in the second place, I don't like it at all. I do not wish people to think that I have to come and go just at your beck or nod. I was about starting when you spoke to me, but sat an hour longer just on purpose."

The mind of Canning, already fretted, was set on fire by this.

"You did?" he said.

"Yes, I did. And I can tell you, once for all, that I wish this to be the last time you speak to me as you did to-night."

It was as much as the impatient spirit of Canning could do to keep from replying—

"It's the last time I will ever speak to you at all," and then leaving her in the street, with the intention of never seeing her again. But suddenly he

thought of Lilly, and the presence of the child in his mind kept back the mad words from his lips. Not one syllable did he utter during their walk home, although his wife said much to irritate rather than soothe him. Nor did a sentence pass his lips that night.

At the breakfast table on the next morning, the husband and wife were coldly polite to each other. When the meal was completed, Canning retired to his office, and his wife sought her chamber to weep. The latter half repented of what she had done, but her contrition was not hearty enough to prompt to a confession of her fault. The fact that she considered her husband to blame, stood in the way of this.

Reserve and coldness marked the intercourse of the unhappy couple for several weeks; and then the clouds began to break, and there were occasional glimpses of sunshine.

But, before there was a clear sky, some trifling occurrence put them again at variance. From this time, unhappily, one circumstance after another transpired to fret them with each other, and to separate, rather than unite them. Daily, Canning grew more cold and reserved, and his wife met him in a like uncompromising spirit. Even their lovely child—their darling blue-eyed Lilly—with her sweet little voice and smiling face, could not soften their hearts toward each other.

To add fuel to this rapidly enkindling fire of discord, was the fact that Mrs. Canning was on particularly intimate terms with the wife of a man toward whom her husband entertained a settled and well-grounded dislike, and visited her more frequently

than she did any one of her friends. He did not interfere with her in the matter, but it annoyed him to hear her speak, occasionally, of meeting Mr. Richards at his house, and repeating the polite language he used to her, when he detested the character of Richards, and had not spoken to him for more than a year.

One day Mrs. Canning expressed a wish to go in the evening to a party.

"It will be impossible for me to go to-night, or, indeed, this week," Canning said. "I am engaged in a very important case, which will come up for trial on Friday, and it will take all my time properly to prepare for it. I shall be engaged every evening, and perhaps late every night."

Mrs. Canning looked disappointed, and said she thought he might spare her one evening.

"You know I would do so, Margaret, with pleasure," he replied, "but the case is one involving too much to be endangered by any consideration. Next week we will go to a party."

When Canning came home to tea, he found his wife dressed to go out.

"I'm going to the party, for all you can't go with me," said she.

"Indeed! With whom are you going?"

"Mrs. Richards came in to see me after dinner, when I told her how much disappointed I was about not being able to go to the party to-night. She said that she and her husband were going, and that it would give them great pleasure to call for me. Am I not fortunate?"

"But you are not going with Mr. and Mrs. Richards?"

"Indeed I am! Why not?"

"Margaret! You must not go."

"Must not, indeed! You speak in quite a tone of authority, Mr. Canning;" and the wife drew herself up haughtily.

"Authority, or no authority, Margaret"—Canning now spoke calmly, but his lips were pale—"I will never consent that my wife shall be seen in a public assembly with Richards. You know my opinion of the man."

"I know you are prejudiced against him, though I believe unjustly."

"Madness!" exclaimed Canning, thrown off his guard. "And this from you?"

"I don't see that you have any cause for getting into a passion, Mr. Canning," said his wife, with provoking coolness. "And, I must say, that you interfere with my freedom rather more than a husband has any right to do. But, to cut this matter short, let me tell you, once for all, that I am going to the assembly to-night with Mr. and Mrs. Richards. Having promised to do so, I mean to keep my promise."

"Margaret, I positively forbid your going!" said Canning, in much excitement.

"I deny your right to command me! In consenting to become your wife, I did not make myself your slave; although it is clear from this, and other things that have occurred since our marriage, that you consider me as occupying that position."

"Then it is your intention to go with this man?"

said Canning, again speaking in a calm but deep voice.

"Certainly it is."

"Very well. I will not make any threat of what I will do, Margaret. But this I can assure you, that lightly as you may think of this matter, if persevered in, it will cause you more sorrow than you have ever known. Go! Go against my wish—against my command, if you will have it so—and when you feel the consequence, lay the blame upon no one but yourself. And now let me say to you, Margaret, that your conduct as a wife has tended rather to estrange your husband's heart from you than to win his love. I say this now, because I may not have——"

"James! It is folly for you to talk to me after that fashion," exclaimed Margaret, breaking in upon him. "I——"

But before she could finish the sentence, Canning had left the room, closing the door hard after him.

Just an hour from this time, Mr. and Mrs. Richards called in their carriage for Mrs. Canning, who went with them to the assembly. An hour was a long period for reflection, and ought to have afforded sufficient time for the wife of Canning to come to a wiser determination than that from which she acted.

Not half a dozen revolutions of the carriage wheels had been made, however, before Margaret repented of what she had done. But it was now too late. The pleasure of the entertainment passed before her, but it found no response in her breast. She saw little but the pale, compressed lip and knit brow of her husband, and heard little but his word of disap

proval. Oh! how she did long for the confused pageant that was moving before her, and the discordant mingling of voices and instruments, to pass away, that she might return and tell him that she repented of all that she had done.

At last the assembly broke up, and she was free to go back again to the home that had not, alas! proved as pleasant a spot to her as her imagination had once pictured it.

"And that it has not been so," she murmured to herself, "he has not been all to blame."

On being left at the door, Mrs. Canning rang the bell impatiently. As soon as admitted, she flew up stairs to meet her husband, intending to confess her error, and beg him earnestly to forgive her for having acted so directly in opposition to his wishes. But she did not find him in the chamber. Throwing off her bonnet and shawl, she went down into the parlours, but found all dark there.

"Where is Mr. Canning?" she asked of a servant.

"He went away about ten o'clock, and has not returned yet," was replied.

This intelligence caused Mrs. Canning to lean hard on the stair-railing for support. She felt in an instant weak almost as an infant.

Without further question, she went back to her chamber, and looked about fearfully on bureaus and tables for a letter addressed to her in her husband's handwriting. But nothing of this met her eye. Then she sat down to await her husband's return. But she waited long. Daylight found her an anxious watcher; he was still away.

The anguish of mind experienced during that un-

happy night, it would be vain for us to attempt to picture. In the morning, on descending to the parlour, she found on one of the pier-tables a letter bearing her name. She broke the seal tremblingly. It did not contain many words, but they fell upon her heart with an icy coldness.

"MARGARET: Your conduct to-night has decided me to separate myself from a woman who I feel neither truly loves nor respects me. The issue which I have for some time dreaded has come. It is better for us to part than to live in open discord. I shall arrange every thing for your comfortable support, and then leave the city, perhaps for ever. You need not tell our child that her father lives. I would rather she would think him dead than at variance with her mother.

"JAMES CANNING.'

These were the words. Their effect was paralyzing. Mrs. Canning had presence of mind enough to crush the fatal letter into her bosom, and strength enough to take her back to her chamber. When there, she sunk powerless upon her bed, and remained throughout the day too weak in both body and mind to rise or think. She could do little else but feel.

Five years from the day of that unhappy separation, we find Mrs. Canning in the unobtrusive home of Aunt Hannah, who took the almost heart-broken wife into the bosom of her own family, after the passage of nearly a year had made her almost hopeless of ever seeing him again. No one knew where he was. Only once did Margaret hear from him,

and that was on the third day after he had parted from her, when he appeared in the court-room, and made a most powerful argument in favour of the client whose important case had prevented his going with his wife to the assembly. After that he disappeared, and no one could tell aught of him. A liberal annuity had been settled upon his wife, and the necessary papers to enable her to claim it transmitted to her under a blank envelope.

Five years had changed Margaret sadly. The high-spirited, blooming, happy woman, was now a meek, quiet, pale-faced sufferer. Lilly had grown finely, all unconscious of her mother's suffering, and was a very beautiful child. She attracted the notice of every one.

"Aunt Hannah," said Margaret, one day after this long, long period of suffering, "I have what you will call a strange idea in my mind. It has been visiting me for weeks, and now I feel much inclined to act from its dictates. You know that Mr. and Mrs. Edwards are going to Paris next month. Ever since Mrs. Edwards mentioned it to me, I have felt a desire to go with them. I don't know why, but so it is. I think it would do me good to go to Paris and spend a few months there. When a young girl, I always had a great desire to see London and Paris; and this desire is again in my mind."

"I would go, then," said Aunt Hannah, who thought favourably of any thing likely to divert the mind of her niece from the brooding melancholy in which it was shrouded.

To Paris Mrs. Canning went, accompanied by her little daughter, who was the favourite of every one

on board the steamer in which they sailed. In this gay city, however, she did not attain as much relief of mind as she had anticipated. She found it almost impossible to take interest in any thing, and soon began to long for the time to come when she could go back to the home and heart of her good Aunt Hannah. The greatest pleasure she took was in going with Lilly to the Gardens of the Tuileries, and amid the crowd there to feel alone with nature in some of her most beautiful aspects. Lilly was always delighted to get there, and never failed to bring something in her pocket for the pure white swans that floated so gracefully in the marble basin into which the water dashed cool and sparkling from beautiful fountains.

One day, while the child was playing at a short distance from her mother, a man seated beside a bronze statue, over which drooped a large orange tree, fixed his eyes upon her admiringly, as hundreds of others had done. Presently she came up and stood close to him, looking up into the face of the statue. The man said something to her in French, but Lilly only smiled and shook her head.

"What is your name, dear?" he then said in English.

"Lilly," replied the child.

A quick change passed over the man's face. With much more interest in his voice, he said—

"Where do you live? In London?"

"Oh no, sir; I live in America."

"What is your name besides Lilly?"

"Lilly Canning, sir."

The man now became strongly agitated. But he contended vigorously with his feelings.

"Where is your mother, dear?" he asked, taking her hand as he spoke, and gently pressing it between his own.

"She is here, sir," returned Lilly, looking inquiringly into the man's face.

"Here!"

"Yes, sir. We come here every day."

"Where is your mother now?"

"Just on the other side of the fountain. You can't see her for the lime-tree."

"Is your father here, also?" continued the man.

"No, I don't know where my father is."

"Is he dead?"

"No, sir; mother says he is not dead, and that she hopes he will come home soon. Oh! I wish he would come home. We would all love him so!"

The man rose up quickly, and turning from the child, walked hurriedly away. Lilly looked after him for a moment or two, and then ran back to her mother.

On the next day Lilly saw the same man sitting under the bronze statue. He beckoned to her, and she went to him.

"How long have you been in Paris, dear?" he asked.

"A good many weeks," she replied.

"Are you going to stay much longer?"

"I don't know. But mother wants to go home."

"Do you like to live in Paris?"

"No, sir. I would rather live at home with mother and Aunt Hannah."

"You live with Aunt Hannah, then?'

"Yes, sir. Do you know Aunt Hannah?" and the child looked up wonderingly into the man's face.

"I used to know her," he replied.

Just then Lilly heard her mother calling her, and she started and ran away in the direction from which the voice came. The man's face grew slightly pale, and he was evidently much agitated. As he had done on the evening previous, he rose up hastily and walked away. But in a short time he returned, and appeared to be carefully looking about for some one. At length he caught sight of Lilly's mother. She was sitting with her eyes upon the ground, the child leaning upon her, and looking into her face, which he saw was thin and pale, and overspread with a hue of sadness. Only for a few moments did he thus gaze upon her, and then he turned and walked hurriedly from the garden.

Mrs. Canning sat alone with her child that evening, in the handsomely-furnished apartments she had hired on arriving in Paris.

"He told you that he knew Aunt Hannah?" she said, rousing up from a state of deep thought.

"Yes, ma. He said he used to know her."

"I wonder"——

A servant opened the door, and said that a gentleman wished to see Mrs. Canning.

"Tell him to walk in," the mother of Lilly had just power to say. In breathless suspense she waited for the space of a few seconds, when the man who had spoken to Lilly in the Gardens of the Tuileries entered and closed the door after him.

Mrs. Canning raised her eyes to his face. It was her husband! She did not cry out nor spring forward. She had not the power to do either.

"That's him now, mother!" exclaimed Lilly.

"It's your father!" said Mrs. Canning, in a deeply breathed whisper.

The child sprung toward him with a quick bound, and was instantly clasped in his arms.

"Lilly, dear Lilly!" he sobbed, pressing his lips upon her brow and cheeks. "Yes! I am your father!"

The wife and mother sat motionless and tearless, with her eyes fixed upon the face of her husband. After a few passionate embraces, Canning drew the child's arms from about his neck, and setting her down upon the floor, advanced slowly toward his wife. Her eyes were still tearless, but large drops were rolling over his face.

"Margaret!" he said, uttering her name with great tenderness.

He was by her side in time to receive her upon his bosom, as she sunk forward in a wild passion of tears.

All was reconciled. The desolate hearts were again peopled with living affections. The arid waste smiled in greenness and beauty.

In their old home, bound by threefold cords of love, they now think only of the past as a severe lesson by which they have been taught the heavenly virtue of forbearance. Five years of intense suffering changed them both, and left marks that after years can never efface. But selfish impatience and pride were all subdued, and their hearts melted into

each other, until they became almost like one heart. Those who meet them now, and observe the deep, but unobtrusive affection with which they regard each other, would never imagine, did they not know their previous history, that love, during one period of that married life, had been so long and so totally eclipsed.

THE SOCIAL SERPENT.

A LADY, whom we will call Mrs. Harding, touched with the destitute condition of a poor, sick widow, who had three small children, determined, from an impulse of true humanity, to awaken, if possible, in the minds of some friends and neighbours, an interest in her favour. She made a few calls, one morning, with this end in view, and was gratified to find that her appeal made a favourable impression. The first lady whom she saw, a Mrs. Miller, promised to select from her own and children's wardrobe a number of cast-off garments for the widow, and to aid her in other respects, at the same time asking Mrs. Harding to call in on the next day, when she would be able to let her know what she could do.

Pleased with her reception, and encouraged to seek further aid for the widow, Mrs. Harding withdrew and took her way to the house of another acquaintance. Scarcely had she left, when a lady,

named Little, dropped in to see Mrs. Miller. To her the latter said, soon after her entrance:

"I've been very much interested in the case of a poor widow this morning. She is sick, with three little children dependent on her, and destitute of almost every thing. Mrs. Harding was telling me about it."

"Mrs. Harding!" The visitor's countenance changed, and she looked unutterable things. "I wonder!" she added, in well assumed surprise, and then was silent.

"What's the matter with Mrs. Harding?" asked Mrs. Miller.

"I should think," said Mrs. Little, "that she was in nice business, running around, gossiping about indigent widows, when some of her own relatives are so poor they can hardly keep soul and body together."

"Is this really so?" asked Mrs. Miller.

"Certainly it is. I had it from my chambermaid, whose sister is cook next door to where a cousin of Mrs. Harding's lives, and she says they are, one half of their time, she really believes, in a starving condition."

"But does Mrs. Harding know this?"

"She ought to know it, for she goes there sometimes, I hear."

"She didn't come merely to gossip about the poor widow," said Mrs. Miller. "Her errand was to obtain something to relieve her necessities."

"Did you give her any thing?" asked Mrs. Little.

"No; but I told her to call and see me to-morrow, when I would have something for her."

"Do you want to know my opinion of this matter?" said Mrs. Little, drawing herself up, and assuming a very important air.

"What is your opinion?"

"Why, that there is no poor widow in the case at all."

"Mrs. Little!"

"You needn't look surprised. I'm in earnest. I never had much faith in Mrs. Harding, at the best."

"I *am* surprised. If there was no poor widow in the case, what did she want with charity?"

"She has poor relations of her own, for whom, I suppose, she's ashamed to beg. So you see my meaning now."

"You surely wrong her."

"Don't believe a word of it. At any rate, take my advice, and be the almoner of your own bounty. When Mrs. Harding comes again, ask her the name of this poor widow, and where she resides. If she gives you a name and residence, go and see for yourself."

"I will act on your suggestion," said Mrs. Miller. "Though I can hardly make up my mind to think so meanly of Mrs. Harding; still, from the impression your words produce, I deem it only prudent to be, as you term it, the almoner of my own bounty."

The next lady upon whom Mrs. Harding called, was a Mrs. Johns, and in her mind she succeeded in also awakening an interest for the poor widow.

"Call and see me to-morrow," said Mrs. Johns, "and I'll have something for you."

Not long after Mrs. Harding's departure, Mrs. Little called, in her round of gossipping visits, and

to her Mrs. Johns mentioned the case of the poor widow, that matter being, for the time, uppermost in her thoughts.

"Mrs. Harding's poor widow, I suppose," said Mrs. Little, in a half-sneering, half-malicious tone of voice.

Mrs. Johns looked surprised, as a matter of course.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing, much. Only I've heard of this destitute widow before."

"You have?"

"Yes, and between ourselves,"—the voice of Mrs. Little became low and confidential—"it's the opinion of Mrs. Miller and myself, that there is no poor widow in the case."

"Mrs. Little! You astonish me! No poor widow in the case! I can't understand this. Mrs. Harding was very clear in her statement. She described the widow's condition, and very much excited my sympathies. What object can she have in view?"

"Mrs. Miller and I think," said the visitor, "and with good reason, that this poor widow is only put forward as a cover."

"As a cover to what?"

"To some charities that she has reasons of her own for not wishing to make public."

"Still in the dark. Speak out more plainly."

"Plainly, then, Mrs. Johns, we have good reasons for believing, Mrs. Miller and I, that she is begging for some of her own poor relations. Mrs. Miller is going to see if she can find the widow."

"Indeed! That's another matter altogether. I promised to do something in the case, but shall now

decline. I couldn't have believed such a thing of Mrs. Harding! But so it is; you never know people until you find them out."

"No, indeed, Mrs. Johns. You never spoke a truer word in your life," replied Mrs. Little, emphatically.

On the day following, after seeing the poor widow, ministering to some of her immediate wants, and encouraging her to expect more substantial relief, Mrs. Harding called, as she had promised to do, on Mrs. Miller. A little to her surprise, that lady received her with unusual coldness; and yet, plainly, with an effort to seem friendly.

"You have called about the poor widow you spoke of yesterday?" said Mrs. Miller.

"Such is the object of my present visit."

"What is her name?"

"Mrs. Aitken."

"Where did you say she lived?"

The residence was promptly given.

"I've been thinking," said Mrs. Miller, slightly colouring, and with some embarrassment, "that I would call in and see this poor woman myself."

"I wish you would," was the earnest reply of Mrs. Harding. "I am sure, if you do so, all your sympathies will be excited in her favour."

As Mrs. Harding said this, she arose, and with a manner that showed her feelings to be hurt, as well as mortified, bade Mrs. Miller a formal good-morning, and retired. Her next call was upon Mrs. Johns. Much to her surprise, her reception here was quite as cold; in fact, so cold, that she did not even refer to the object of her visit, and Mrs. Johns let her go

away without calling attention to it herself. So affected was she by the singular, and to her unaccountable change in the manner of these ladies, that Mrs. Harding had no heart to call upon two others, who had promised to do something for the widow, but went home disappointed, and suffering from a troubled and depressed state of feeling.

So far as worldly goods were concerned, Mrs. Harding could not boast very large possessions. She was herself a widow; and her income, while it sufficed, with economy, to supply the moderate wants of her family, left her but little for luxuries, the gratification of taste, or the pleasures of benevolence. Quick to feel the wants of the needy, no instance of destitution came under her observation that she did not make some effort toward procuring relief.

What now was to be done? She had excited the sick woman's hopes—had promised that her immediate wants, and those of her children, should be supplied. From her own means, without great self-denial, this could not be effected. True, Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Johns had both promised to call upon the poor widow, and, in person, administer relief. But Mrs. Harding did not place much reliance on this; for something in the manner of both ladies impressed her with the idea that their promise merely covered a wish to recede from their first benevolent intentions.

"Something must be done," said she, musingly. And then she set herself earnestly to the work of devising ways and means. Where there is a will there is a way. No saying was ever truer than this.

It was, perhaps, a week later, that Mrs. Little called again upon Mrs. Miller.

"What of Mrs. Harding's poor widow?" said the former, after some ill-natured gossip about a mutual friend.

"Oh, I declare! I've never thought of the woman since," replied Mrs. Miller, in a tone of self-condemnation. "And I promised Mrs. Harding that I would see her. I really blame myself."

"No great harm done, I presume," said Mrs. Little.

"I don't know about that. I'm hardly prepared to think so meanly of Mrs. Harding as you do. At any rate, I'm going this day to redeem my promise."

"What promise?"

"The promise I made Mrs. Harding, that I would see the woman she spoke of, and relieve her, if in need."

"You'll have all your trouble for nothing."

"No matter, I'll clear my conscience, and that is something. Come, wont you go with me?"

Mrs. Little declined the invitation at first; but, strongly urged by Mrs. Miller, she finally consented. So the two ladies forthwith took their way toward the neighbourhood in which Mrs. Harding had said the needy woman lived. They were within a few doors of the house, which had been very minutely described by Mrs. Harding, when they met Mrs. Johns.

"Ah!" said the latter, with animation, "just the person, of all others, I most wished to see. How could you, Mrs. Miller, so greatly wrong Mrs. Harding?"

"Me wrong her, Mrs. Johns? I don't understand

you." And Mrs. Miller looked considerably astonished.

"Mrs. Little informed me that you had good reasons for believing all this story about a poor widow to be a mere subterfuge, got up to cover some doings of her own that Mrs. Harding was ashamed to bring to the light."

"Mrs. Little!" There was profound astonishment in the tones of Mrs. Miller, and her eyes had in them such an indignant light, as she fixed them upon her companion, that the latter quailed under her gaze.

"Acting from this impression," resumed Mrs. Johns, "I declined placing at her disposal the means of relief promised; but, instead, told her that I would myself see the needy person for whom she asked aid. This I have, until now, neglected to do; and this neglect, or indifference I might rather call it, has arisen from a belief that there was no poor widow in the case. Wrong has been done, Mrs. Miller, great wrong! How could you have imagined such baseness of Mrs. Harding?"

"And there *is* a poor, sick widow, in great need?" said Mrs. Miller, now speaking calmly, and with regained self-possession.

"There is a sick widow," replied Mrs. Johns, "but not at present in great need. Mrs. Harding has supplied immediate wants."

"Well, Mrs. Little!" Mrs. Miller again turned her eyes, searchingly, upon her companion.

"I—I—thought so. It was my impression—I had good reason for—I—I" stammered Mrs. Little.

"It should have been enough for you to check a

benevolent impulse in my case by your unfounded suggestions. Not content with this, however, you must use my name in still further spreading your unjust suspicions, and actually make me the author of charges against a noble-minded woman, which had their origin in your own evil thoughts."

"I will not bear such language!" said the offended Mrs. Little, indignantly; and turning with an angry toss of the head, she left the ladies to their own reflections.

"I am taught one good lesson from this circumstance," said Mrs. Miller, as they walked away; "and that is, never to even seem to have my good opinion of another affected by the allegations and surmises of a social gossip. Such people always suppose the worst, and readily pervert the most unselfish actions into moral offences. The harm they do is incalculable."

"And, as in the present case," remarked Mrs. Johns, "they make others responsible for their base suggestions. Had Mrs. Little not coupled your name with the implied charges against Mrs. Harding, my mind would not have been poisoned against her."

"While not a breath of suspicion had ever crossed mine until Mrs. Little came in, and wantonly intercepted the stream of benevolence about to flow forth to a needy, and, I doubt not, most worthy object."

"We have made of her an enemy. At least you have; for you spoke to her with smarting plainness," said Mrs. Johns.

"Better the enmity of such than their friendship," replied Mrs. Miller. "Their words of detraction cannot harm so much as the poison of evil thoughts

toward others, which they ever seek to infuse. Your dearest friend is not safe from them, if she be pure as an angel. Let her name but pass your lips, and instantly it is breathed upon, and the spotless surface grows dim."

THE YOUNG MOTHER.

[The following brief passage is from our story, "The Wife," in the series "Maiden," "Wife," and Mother."]

A NEW chord vibrated in Anna's heart, and the music was sweeter far in her spirit's ear, than any before heard. She was changed. Suddenly she felt that she was a new creature. Her breast was filled with deeper, purer, and tenderer emotions. She was a mother! A babe had been born to her! A sweet pledge of love lay nestling by her side, and drawing its life from her bosom. She was happy—how happy cannot be told. A mother only can *feel* how happy she was on first realizing the new emotions that thrill in a young mother's heart.

As health gradually returned to her exhausted frame, and friends gathered around her with warm congratulations, Anna felt that she was indeed beginning a new life. Every hour her soul seemed to enlarge, and her mind to be filled with higher and purer thoughts. Before the birth of her babe, she suffered much more than even her husband had sup

posed, both in body and mind. Her spirits were often so depressed that it required her utmost effort to receive him with her accustomed cheerfulness at each period of his loved return. But, living as she did in the ever active endeavour to bless others, she strove daily and hourly to rise above every infirmity. Now, all was peace within—holy peace. There came a Sabbath rest of deep, interior joy, that was sweet, unutterably sweet. Body and spirit entered into this rest. No wind ruffled the still, bright waters of her life. She was the same, and yet not the same.

"I cannot tell you, dear husband! how happy I am," she said, a few weeks after her babe was born. "Nor can I describe the different emotions that pervade my heart. When our babe is in my arms, and especially when it lies at my bosom, it seems as if angels were near me."

"And angels are near you," replied her husband. "Angels love innocence, and especially infants, that are forms of innocence. They are present with them, and the mother shares the blessed company, for she loves her babe with an unselfish love, and this the angels can perceive, and, through it, affect her with a measure of their own happiness.

"How delightful the thought! Above all, is the mother blessed. She suffers much—her burden is hard to bear—the night is dark—but the morning that opens upon her is the brightest a human soul knows during its earthly pilgrimage. And no wonder. She has performed the highest and holiest of offices—she has given birth to an immortal being—and her reward is with her."

Hartley had loved his wife truly, deeply, tenderly. Every day, he saw more and more in her to admire. There was an order, consistency, and harmony in her character as a wife, that won his admiration. In the few months they had passed since their marriage, she had filled her place to him, perfectly. Without seeming to reflect how she should regulate her conduct toward her husband, in every act of her wedded life she had displayed true wisdom, united with unvarying love. All this caused his heart to unite itself more and more closely with hers. But now, that she held to him the twofold relation of a wife and mother, his love was increased fourfold. He thought of her, and looked upon her, with increased tenderness.

"Mine, by a double tie," he said, with a full realization of his words, when he first pressed his lips upon the brow of his child, and then, with a fervour unfelt before, upon the lips of his wife. "As you have been a good wife, you will be a good mother," he added, with emotion.

THE GENTLE WARNING.

"Do not accept the offer, Florence," said her friend Carlotti.

A shade of disappointment went over the face of the fair girl, who had just communicated the pleasing fact that she had received an offer of marriage.

"You cannot be happy as the wife of Herman Leland," added Carlotti.

"How little do you know this heart," returned the fond girl.

"It is because I know it so well that I say what I do. If your love be poured out for Herman Leland, Florence, it will be as water on the desert sand."

"Why do you affirm this, Carlotti?"

"A woman can truly love only the moral virtue of her husband."

"I do not clearly understand you."

"It is only genuine goodness of heart that conjoins in marriage."

"Well?"

"Just so far as selfish and evil affections find a place in the mind of either the husband or wife, will be the ratio of unhappiness in the marriage state. If there be any truth in morals, or in the doctrine of affinities, be assured that this is so. It is neither intellectual attainments nor personal attractions that

make happiness in marriage. Far, very far from it. All depends upon the quality of the affections. If these be good, happiness will come as a natural consequence; but if they be evil, misery will inevitably follow so close a union."

"Then you affirm that Mr. Leland is an evil-minded man?"

"Neither of us know him well enough to say this positively, Florence. Judging from what little I have seen, I should call him a selfish man; and no selfish man can be a good man, for selfishness is the basis of all evil."

"I am afraid you are prejudiced against him, Carlotti."

"If I have had any prejudices in the matter, Florence, they have been in his favour. Well-educated, refined in his manners, and variously accomplished, he creates, on nearly all minds, a favourable impression. Such an impression did I at first feel. But the closer I drew near to him, the less satisfied did I feel with my first judgment. On at least two occasions, I have heard him speak lightly of religion."

"Of mere cant and sectarianism, perhaps."

"No; he once spoke lightly of a mother for making it a point to require all her children to repeat their prayers before going to bed. On another occasion, he alluded to one of the sacraments of the church in a way that produced an inward shudder. From that time, I have looked at him with eyes from which the scales have been removed; and the more I seek to penetrate beneath the surface of his character, the more do I see what repels me. Florence,

dear, let me urge you, as one who tenderly loves you and earnestly desires to see you happy, to weigh the matter well ere you assent to this proposal."

"I'm afraid, Carlotti," said Florence in reply to this, "that you have let small causes influence your feelings toward Mr. Leland. We all speak lightly, at times, even on subjects regarded as sacred—not because we despise them, but from casual thoughtlessness. It was, no doubt, so with Mr. Leland on the occasion to which you refer."

"We are rarely mistaken, Florence," replied Carlotti, "as to the real sentiment involved in the words used by those with whom we converse. Words are the expressions of thoughts, and these the form of affections. What a man really feels in reference to any subject, will generally appear in the tones of his voice, no matter whether he speak lightly or seriously. Depend upon it, this is so. It was the manner in which Leland spoke that satisfied me as to his real feelings, more than the language he used. Judging him in this way, I am well convinced that, in his heart, he despises religion; and no man who does this, can possibly make a right-minded woman happy."

The gentle warning of Carlotti was not wholly lost on Florence. She had great confidence in the judgment of her friend, and did not feel that it would be right to wholly disregard her admonitions.

"What answer can I make?" said she, drawing a long sigh. "He urges an early response to his suit."

"Duty to yourself, Florence, demands a time for

consideration. Marriage is a thing of too vital moment to be decided upon hurriedly. Say to him in reply, that his offer is unexpected, and that you cannot give an immediate answer, but will do so at the earliest possible moment."

"So cold a response may offend him."

"If it does, then he will exhibit a weakness of character unfitting him to become the husband of a sensible woman. If he be really attracted by your good qualities, he will esteem you the more for this act of prudence. He will understand that you set a high regard upon the marriage relation, and do not mean to enter into it unless you know well the person to whom you commit your happiness in this world, and, in all probability, the next."

"A coldly calculating spirit, Carlotti, that nicely weighs and balances the merits and defects of one beloved, is, in my view, hardly consonant with true happiness in marriage. All have defects of character. All are born with evil inclinations of one kind or another. Love seeks only for good in the object of affection. Affinities of this kind are almost spontaneous in their birth. We love more from impulse than from any clear appreciation of character—perceiving good qualities by a kind of instinct rather than searching for them."

"A doctrine, Florence," said Carlotti, "that has produced untold misery in the married life. As I said at first, it is only the moral virtue of her husband that a woman can love—it is only this, as a uniting principle, that can make two married partners one. The qualities of all minds express themselves in words and actions, and, by a close observance

of these latter, we may determine the nature of the former. We cannot perceive them with sufficient clearness to arrive at a sound judgment: the only safe method is to determine the character of the tree by its fruits. Take sufficient time to arrive at a knowledge of Mr. Leland's character by observation, and then you can accept or reject him under the fullest assurance that you are acting wisely."

"Perhaps you are right," murmured Florence. "I will weigh carefully what you have said."

And she did so. Much to the disappointment of Mr. Leland, he received a reply from Florence asking a short time for reflection.

When Florence next met the young man, there was, as a natural consequence, some slight embarrassment on both sides. On separating, Florence experienced a certain unfavourable impression toward him, although she could not trace it to any thing he had said or done. At their next meeting, Leland's reserve had disappeared, and he exhibited a better flow of spirits. He was more off his guard than usual, and said a good many things that rather surprised Florence.

Impatient of delay, Leland again pressed his suit; but Florence was further than ever from being ready to give an answer. She was not prepared to reject him, and as little prepared to give a favourable answer. Her request to be allowed further time for consideration, wounded his pride; and, acting under its influence, he determined to have his revenge on her by suing for the hand of another maiden, and bearing her to the altar while she was hesitating over the offer he had made. With this purpose in

view, he penned a kind and polite note, approving her deliberation, and desiring her to take the fullest time for reflection. "Marriage," said he, in this note, "is too serious a matter to be decided upon hastily. It is a life-union, and the parties who make it should be well satisfied that there exists a mutual fitness for each other."

Two days passed after Florence received this note before seeing her friend Carlotti. She then called upon her in order to have further conversation on the subject of the proposal she had received. The tenor of this note had produced a favourable change in her feelings, and she felt strongly disposed to make a speedy termination of the debate in her mind by accepting her attractive suitor.

"Are you not well?" was her first remark on seeing Carlotti, for her friend looked pale and troubled.

"Not very well, dear," replied Carlotti, making an effort to assume a cheerful aspect.

The mind of Florence was too intent on the one interesting subject that occupied it to linger long on any other theme. But a short time elapsed before she said, with a warmer glow on her cheeks—

"I believe I have made up my mind, Carlotti."

"About what?"

"The offer of Mr. Leland."

"Well, what is your decision?" Carlotti held her breath for an answer.

"I will accept him."

Without replying, Carlotti arose, and going to a drawer, took therefrom a letter addressed to herself, and handing it to Florence, said—

"Read that."

There was something ominous in the manner of Carlotti, which caused Florence to become agitated. Her hands trembled as she unfolded the letter. It bore the date of the day previous, and read thus:—

"My Dear Carlotti: From the first moment I saw you, I felt that you were the one destined to make me happy or miserable. Your image has been present to me, sleeping or waking, ever since. I can turn in no way that it is not before me. The oftener I have met you, the more have I been charmed by the gentleness, the sweetness, the purity, and excellence of your character. With you to walk through life by my side, I feel that my feet would tread a flowery way; but if heaven have not this blessing in store for me, I shall be, of all men, most miserable. My heart is too full to write more. And have I not said enough? Love speaks in brief but eloquent language. Dear young lady, let me hear from you speedily. I shall be wretched until I know your decision. Heaven give my suit a favourable issue! Yours, devotedly,

"Herman Leland."

A deadly paleness overspread the countenance of Florence as the letter dropped from her hands; and she leaned back against her friend to prevent falling to the floor. But, in a little while, she recovered herself.

"And this to *you?*" said she, with a quivering lip, as she gazed earnestly into the face of her friend.

"Yes, Florence, that to *me*."

"Can I trust my own senses? Is there not some illusion? Let me look at it again."

And Florence stooped for the letter, and fixed her eyes upon it once more. The language was plain, and the handwriting she knew too well.

"False-hearted!" she murmured, in a low and mournful voice, covering her face and sobbing.

"Yes, Florence," said her friend, he is false-hearted. How thankful am I that you have escaped! Evidently in revenge for your prudent deliberation, he has sought an alliance with another. Had that other one accepted his heartless proposal, he would have met your favourable answer to his suit with insult."

For a long time, Florence wept on the bosom of her friend. Then her feelings grew calmer, and her mind became clear.

"What an escape!" fell from her lips as she raised her head and turned her still pale face toward Carlotti. "Thanks, my wiser friend, for your timely, yet gentle warning! Your eyes saw deeper than mine."

"Yes, yes; you have made an escape!" said Carlotti. "With such a man, your life could only have been wretched."

"Have you answered his letter?" asked Florence.

"Not yet. But if you are inclined to do so, we will, on the same sheet of paper and under the same envelope, each decline the honour of an alliance. Such a rebuke he deserves, and we ought to give it."

And such a rebuke they gave.

A few months later, and Leland led to the altar a young lady reputed to be an heiress.

A year afterward, just on the eve of Florence's marriage to a gentleman in every way worthy to take her happiness in his keeping, she sat alone with her fast friend Carlotti. They were conversing of the bright future.

"And for all this joy, in store for me, Carlotti," said Florence, leaning toward her friend and laying her hand affectionately on her cheek, "I am indebted to you."

"To me? How to me, dear?" asked Carlotti.

"You saved me from an alliance with Leland. Oh, into what an abyss of wretchedness would I have fallen! I heard to-day that, after cruelly abusing poor Agnes in Charleston, where they removed, he finally abandoned her. Can it be true?"

"It is, I believe, too true. Agnes came back to her friends last week, bringing with her a babe. I have not seen her; but those who have tell me that her story of suffering makes the heart ache. She looks ten years older."

"Ah me!" sighed Florence. "Marriage—how much it involves! Even now, as I stand at its threshold, with so much that looks bright in the future, I tremble. Of Edward's excellent character and goodness of heart, all bear testimony. He is every thing I could wish; but will I make him happy?"

"Not all you could wish," said Carlotti, seriously. "None are perfection here; and you must not expect this. You will find, in your husband's character, faults. Anticipate this; but let the anticipation

prepare you to bear with rather than be hurt when they appear, and do not seek too soon to correct them. It is said by a certain deeply-seeing writer on spiritual themes, that when the angels come to try one, they explore his mind only to find the good therein, that they may excite it to activity. Be, then, your husband's angel; explore his mind for the good it contains, and seek to develop and strengthen it. Looking intently at what is good in him, you will not be likely to see faults looming up and assuming a magnitude beyond their real dimensions. But when faults appear, as they assuredly will, compare them with your own; and, as you would have him exercise forbearance toward you, do you exercise forbearance toward him. Be wise in your love, my friend. Wisdom and love are married partners. If you separate them, neither is a safe guide. But if you keep them united, like a rower who pulls both oars, you will glide swiftly forward in a smooth sea."

Florence bent her head as she listened, and every word of her friend made its impression. Long after were they remembered and acted upon, and they saved her from hours of pain. Florence is a happy wife; but how near did she come to making shipwreck of her love-freighted heart? There are times when, in thinking of it, she trembles.

KATE'S EXPERIMENT.

KATE HARBELL, a high-spirited girl, who had a pretty strong will of her own, was about being married. Like a great many others of her age and sex who approach the matrimonial altar, Kate's notions of the marriage relation were not the clearest in the world.

Ferdinand Lee, the betrothed of Kate, a quiet, sensitive young man, had, perhaps, as strong a will as the young lady herself, though it was more under the control of reason. He was naturally impatient of dictation or force, and a strong love of approbation made him feel keenly any thing like satire, ridicule or censure. To point him to a fault was to wound if not offend him. Here lay the weakness of his character. All this, on the other side, was counterbalanced by kind feelings, good sense, and manly principles. He was above all meanness or dishonour.

Of course, Kate did not fully understand his character. Such a thing as a young girl's accurate knowledge of the character of the man she is about to marry, is of very rare occurrence. She saw enough of good qualities to make her love him with tenderness and devotion; but she also saw personal defects that were disagreeable in the object of her affections. But she did not in the least doubt

that all these she could easily correct in him after she became his wife.

From a defect of education, or from a natural want of neatness and order, Ferdinand Lee was inclined to carelessnes in his attire; and also exhibited a certain want of polish in his manners and address that was, at times, particularly annoying to Kate.

"I'll break him of that when I get him," said the young lady to a married friend, alluding to some little peculiarity both had noticed.

"Don't be too certain," returned the lady, smiling.

"You'll see."

Kate tossed her head in a resolute way.

"I'll see you disappointed."

"Wait a little while. Before I'm his wife six months, you'll hardly know the man, there'll be such a change."

"The change is far more likely to take place in you."

"Why do you say that, Mrs. Morton?" inquired Kate, looking grave.

"Because I think so. Men are not so easily brought into order, and the attempt at reformation and correction by a young wife generally ends in painful disappointment. If you begin this work you will, in all probability, find yourself tasked beyond your ability. I speak from some experience, having been married for about ten years, and having seen a good many young girls come up into our ranks from the walks of single blessedness. Take my advice, and look away from Frederick's faults and disagreeable peculiarities as much as possible, and think

more of his manly traits of character—his fine sentiments, and honourable principles."

"I do look at them and love them," replied Kate, with animation. "These won my heart at first, and now unite me to him in bonds that cannot be broken. But if on a precious gem there be a slight blemish that mars its beauty, shall we not seek to remove the defect, and thus give the jewel a higher lustre? Will you say, no?"

"I will, if in the act there be danger of injuring the gem."

"I don't understand you, Mrs. Morton?"

"Reflect for a moment, and see if my meaning is not apparent."

"You think I will offend him if I point out a fault, or seek to correct it?"

"A result most likely to follow."

"I will not think so poorly of his good sense," answered Kate, with some gravity of manner. The suggestion half offended her.

"None are perfect, my young friend; don't forget that," said Mrs. Morton, with equal seriousness. "To think differently is a common mistake of persons circumstanced as you are."

"It's no mistake of mine, let me assure you," replied Kate. "I can see faults as quickly as any one. Love can't blind me. It is because I see defects in Frederick that I wish to correct them."

"And you trust to his good sense to take the work of correction kindly?"

"Certainly I do."

"Then you most probably think him more perfect than he really is. Very few people can bear

to be told of their faults, and fewer still to be told of them by those they love. Love is expected to be blind to defects; therefore, when it is seen looking at and pointing them out, the feeling produced is, in the very nature of things, a disagreeable one. Take my advice, and let Frederick's faults alone, at least for a year after you are married; and even then put your hand on them very lightly, and as if by accident."

"Do you think I could see him lounge, or, rather, slide down in his chair in that ungraceful way, and not speak to him about it? Not I. It makes me nervous now; and, if I wasn't afraid he might take it unkindly, would call his attention to it."

"Do you think he will be less likely to take it unkindly after marriage?"

"Certainly. Then I will have a right to speak to him about it."

"Then marriage will give you certain rights over your husband?"

"It will give him rights over me, and a very poor rule that is which doesn't work both ways. Marriage will make him my husband; and, surely, a wife may tell her husband that he is not perfect, without offending him."

"Kate, Kate; you don't know what you are talking about, child!"

"I think I do."

"And I know you don't."

"Oh, well, Mrs. Morton, we won't quarrel about it," said Kate, laughing. "I mean to make one of the best of wives, and have one of the best of husbands to be found. He will require a little fixing up to

make him just to my mind, but don't you fear but what I'll do it in the gentlest possible manner. Women have more taste than men, you know, and a man never looks and acts just right until he gets a woman to take charge of him."

A happy bride Kate became a few months after this little conversation took place, and Lee thought himself the most fortunate of men in obtaining such a lovely, accomplished, and right-minded woman for a wife. Swiftly glided away the sweet honey-moon, without a jar of discord, though, during the time, Kate saw a good many things not exactly to her mind, and which she set down as needing correction.

One evening, it was just five weeks after the marriage, and when they were snugly settled in their own house, Frederick Lee was seated before the grate, in a handsome rocking-chair, his body in a position that it would have required a stretch of language to pronounce graceful or becoming. He had drawn off one of his boots, that was lying on the floor, and the leg from which it had been taken was hanging over an arm of his chair. He had slipped forward in the chair—his ordinary mode of sitting, or, rather, lying—so far that his head, which, if he had been upright, would have been even with the top of the back, was at least twelve inches below it. To add to the effect of his position, he was swinging the bootless leg that hung across the arm of the chair with a rapid, circling motion. He had been reclining in this inelegant attitude for about ten minutes, when Kate, who had permitted herself to become a good deal annoyed by it, said to him, rather earnestly—

"Do, Frederick, sit up straight, and try and be a little more graceful in your positions."

"What's that?" inquired the young man, as if he had not heard distinctly.

"Can't you sit up straight?"

Kate smiled; but Lee saw that it was a forced smile.

"Oh, yes," he answered, indifferently. "I can sit up straight as an arrow, but I find this attitude most agreeable."

"If you knew how you looked," said Kate.

"How do I look?" asked the young man, playfully.

"Oh! you look—you look more like a country clod-hopper than any thing else."

There was a sharpness in Kate's tones that fell unpleasantly on the ears of the young man.

"Do I, indeed!" was his rather cold remark. Yet he did not change his position.

"Indeed, you do," said the wife, who was, by this time, beginning to feel a good deal of irritation; for she saw that Frederick was not inclined to respond in the way she had hoped, to her very reasonable desire that he would assume a more graceful attitude. "The fact is," she continued, impelled to further utterance by the excited state of her feelings, although she was conscious of having already said more than was agreeable to her husband, "you ought to correct yourself of these ungraceful and undignified habits. It shows a want of"——

Kate stopped suddenly. She felt that she was about using words that would inevitably give offence.

"A want of what?" inquired Lee, in a low, firm

voice, while he continued to look his young wife steadily in the face.

Kate's eyes fell to the floor and she remained silent.

"Ungraceful and undignified. Humph!"

Lee was evidently hurt at this allegation, as the tone in which he repeated the words clearly showed.

"Do you call your present attitude graceful?" Kate asked, rallying herself under the reflection that she was right.

"It is comfortable for me; and, therefore, ought to be graceful in your eyes," was the young man's perverse answer. Not the slightest change had yet taken place in his position.

This was beyond what the high spirited lady could bear, and she retorted with more feeling than discretion:

"Love is not blind in my case, I can assure you, Frederick, and never will be. You are very ungraceful and untidy, and annoy me, sometimes, excessively. I wish you would try to correct these things."

"You do?"

There was something cool and provoking in the way Lee said this.

"I do, Frederick, and I'm in earnest."

The cheeks of Kate were in a glow, and her eyes lit up, and her lips quivering.

"How long since you made the discovery that I was only a country clod-hopper?" said Lee, who was particularly annoyed by Kate's unexpected charges against his good-breeding.

"I didn't say you were only a country clod-hopper," replied Kate.

"I believe you used the words. My ears rarely deceive me. I must own to feeling highly complimented."

"Do sit up straight, Frederick! Do take your leg from over the arm of that chair! You make me so nervous that I can hardly contain myself."

"Really! I thought a man was privileged to sit in any position he pleased in his own house."

The excitement of Kate's mind had, by this time, reached a crisis. Bursting into tears, she hurried from the room, and went sobbing up to her chamber.

Here was a fine state of affairs, indeed! Was ever a man so perverse and unreasonable?

Did Frederick Lee follow, quickly, his weeping wife? No; his pride was too deeply wounded for that.

"A country clod-hopper! Undignified and ungraceful! Upon my word!" Such were some of his mental ejaculations. And then, as his feelings grew excited, he started up from his chair and began pacing the floor, muttering, as he did so—

"It is rather late in the day to make this discovery! Why didn't she find it out before? Humph!"

Meanwhile, Kate had thrown herself across her bed, where she lay, weeping bitterly.

What a storm had suddenly been blown about their ears!

It was fully an hour before Frederick Lee's disturbed feelings began to run at all clear. He was both surprised and offended. What could all this mean? What had all at once come over his young wife?

"A country clod-hopper!" he muttered to himself over and over again. "Ungraceful—ungenteel, and all that! Very complimentary, indeed!"

When Lee joined his wife in their chamber, two hours after she had left him, he found that she had retired to bed and was sleeping.

On the next morning both looked very sober, and both were cold and distant. A few words only passed between them. It was the same when they met at dinner-time, and the same when Lee came home in the evening. During the whole of this day, the thought of each was upon the other; but it was not a forgiving thought. Kate cherished angry feelings toward her husband; and Lee continued to be offended at the freedom of expression which his young wife had ventured to use toward him. Of course, both were very unhappy.

The formal intercourse of the tea-table having ended, Lee, feeling little inclined to pass the evening with his reserved and sober-looking partner, put on his hat, and merely remarking that he would not return until bed-time, left the house. This act startled Kate. With the jar of the closing door came a gush of tears. The evening was passed alone. How wretched she felt as the hours moved slowly on!

It was nearly eleven o'clock when Lee came home. By that time, the mind of Kate was in an agony of suspense. More than once the thought that he had abandoned her intruded itself, and filled her with fear and anguish. What a relief to her feelings it was when she heard the rattle of his night-key in the lock! But she could not meet him with a smile. She could not throw her arms around

his neck, and press her hot cheek to his. No: for she felt that he was angry with her without just cause. and had visited with unjust severity a light offence—if, so far as she was concerned, her act were worthy to be called an offence.

And so they looked coldly upon each other when they met, and then averted their eyes.

The morning broke, but with no fairer promise of a sunny day. Clouds obscured their whole horizon. Coldly they parted after the brief and scarcely tasted meal. How wretched they were!

During the forenoon, Mrs. Morton, the friend of Mrs. Lee, called in to see her young friend.

"Why, Kate! What has happened?" she exclaimed, the moment she saw her.

Mrs. Lee tried to smile and look indifferent, as she answered—

"Happened? Why do you say that?"

"You look as if you hadn't a friend left in the world!"

"And I don't know that I have," said Mrs. Lee, losing, all at once, her self-command, and permitting the ready tears to gush forth.

"Why, Kate, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Morton, drawing her arm around the neck of her young friend. "What is the meaning of all this? Something wrong with Frederick?"

Kate was silent.

Mrs. Morton reflected for a moment, and then said—

"Been trying to correct some of his faults, ha?"

No answer. But the sobbing became less violent.

"Ah, Kate! Kate! I warned you of this."

"Warned me of what?"

Mrs. Lee lifted her head, and tried to assume an air of dignity as she spoke.

"I warned you that Frederick would not bear it, if you attempted to lay your hand upon his faults."

Kate raised her head higher, and compressed her lips. Still she did not answer.

"A young husband, naturally enough, thinks himself faultless—at least in the eyes of his wife."

"Very far from faultless is Frederick in my eyes," said Kate. "My love is not blind, and so I told him."

"You did!"

"Yes, I did, and in so many words," replied Kate, with spirit.

"Ah, silly child!" returned her friend. "Already you have the reward of your folly. I forewarned you how it would be."

"Are my wishes, feelings, and taste to be of no account whatever?" said Kate, warmly. "Frederick is to be and do just what he pleases, and I must say nothing, do nothing, and bear every thing. Was this the contract between us? No, Mrs. Morton!"

The bright eyes of Mrs. Lee flashed with indignant fire.

"Come, come, Katy, dear! Don't let that impulsive heart of thine lead thee too far aside from the path of prudence and safety. I am sure that Frederick Lee is no self-willed, exacting, domestic tyrant. I could not have been so deceived in him. But tell me the particular cause of your trouble. What has been said and done? You have given offence, and he has become offended. Tell me the whole story,

Kate, and then I'll know what to say and do for the restoration of your peace."

"You are aware," said Kate, after a brief pause, and with a deepening flush on her cheeks, "how awkward and untidy Frederick is at times,—how he lounges in his chair, and throws his body into all manner of ungraceful attitudes."

"Well?"

"This, as you know, has always annoyed me sadly. Night before last, I felt so worried with him, that I could not help speaking right out."

"Ah! when you were worried?"

"Of course. If I hadn't felt worried, I wouldn't have said any thing."

"Indeed! Well, what did you say? Was your tone of voice low and full of love, and your words as gentle as the falling dew?"

"Mrs. Morton!"

There was a half-angry, indignant expression in the voice of Kate.

"Did you lay your hand lightly, like the touch of a feather, upon the fault you designed to correct, or did you grasp it rudely and angrily?"

Kate's eyes drooped beneath those of her friend.

"You were annoyed and excited," continued Mrs. Morton. "This by your own acknowledgment, and, in such a frame of mind, you charged with faults the one who had vainly thought himself, at least in your eyes, perfect. And he, as a natural consequence, was hurt and offended. But what did you say to him?"

"I hardly know what I said, now," returned Kate. "But I know I used the words ungraceful, undignified, and country clod-hopper."

"Why, Kate! I am surprised at you! And this to so excellent a man as Frederick, who, from all the fair and gentle ones around him, chose you to be his bosom friend and life companion. Kate, Kate! That was unworthy of you. That was unkind to him. I do not wonder that he was hurt and offended."

"Perhaps I was wrong, Mrs. Morton," said Kate, as tears began to flow again. "But Frederick's want of order, grace, and neatness, is dreadful. I cannot tell you how much it annoys me."

"You saw all this before you were married."

"Not all of it."

"You saw enough to enable you to judge of the rest."

"True; but then I always meant to correct these things in him. They were but blemishes on a jewel of surpassing value."

"Ah, Kate, you have proved the truth of what I told you before your marriage. It is not so easy a thing to correct the faults of a husband—faults confirmed by long habit. Whenever a wife attempts this, she puts in jeopardy, for the time being at least, her happiness, as you have done. A man is but little pleased to make the discovery that his wife thinks him no better than a country clod-hopper; and it is no wonder that he should be offended, if she, with strange indiscreetness and want of tact, tells him in plain terms what she thinks Your husband is sensitive, Kate."

"I know he is."

"And keenly alive to ridicule."

"I am not aware of that."

"Then your reading of his character is less accurate than mine. Moreover, he has a pretty good opinion of himself."

"We all have that."

"And a strong will, quiet as he is in exterior."

"Not stronger, perhaps, than I have."

"Take my advice, Kate," said Mrs. Morton, seriously, "and don't bring your will in direct opposition to his."

"And why not? Am I not his equal? He is no master of mine. I did not sell myself as his slave, that his will should be my law!"

"Silly child! How madly you talk!" said Mrs. Morton. "Not for the world would I have Frederick hear such utterance from your lip. Does he not love you tenderly? Has he not, in every way, sought your happiness thus far in your brief married life? Is he not a man of high moral virtue? Does not your alliance with him rather elevate than depress you in the social rank? And yet, forsooth, because he lounges in his chair, and permits his body, at times, to assume ungraceful attitudes, you must throw the apple of discord into your pleasant home to mar its beautiful harmonies."

"Surely, a wife may be permitted to speak to her husband, and even seek to correct his faults," said Kate.

"Better shut her eyes to his faults, if seeing them is to make them both unhappy. You are in a very strange mood, Kate."

"Am I?" returned Mrs. Lee, querulously.

"You are; and the quicker it passes away, the better for both yourself and husband."

"I don't know how soon it will pass away," sighed Kate, moodily.

"Good-morning," said Mrs. Morton, rising and making a motion to depart.

"You are not going?"

Kate glanced up with a look of surprise.

"Yes; I am afraid to stay here any longer," was the affected serious reply. "I might catch something of your spirit, and then my husband would find a change in his pleasant home. Good-morning. May I see you in a better state of mind when we meet again."

And saying this, Mrs. Morton passed from the room so quickly that Kate could not arrest the movement; so she remained seated, though a little disturbed by her friend and monitor's sudden departure.

What Mrs. Morton had said, although it seemed not to impress the mind of her young friend, yet lingered there, and now began gradually to do its work.

As for Frederick Lee, he was unhappy enough. The words of Kate had stung him severely.

"And so, in her eyes, I am no better than a country clod-hopper!"

Almost every hour was this repeated—sometimes mentally and sometimes aloud; and at each repetition, it disturbed his feelings and awakened an unforgiving spirit.

"A clod-hopper, indeed! Wonder she never made this discovery before!"

This was the thought of Lee as he left his place of business to return home, on the evening of the

day on which Mrs. Morton called upon Kate. Why would he not look away from this? Why would he ponder over and magnify the offence of Kate? Why would he keep this ever before his eyes? His self-love had been wounded. His pride had been touched. The weapon of ridicule had been used against him, and to ridicule he was morbidly sensitive. Kate should have read his character more closely, and should have understood it better. But she was ignorant of his weaknesses, and bore heavily upon them ere aware of their existence.

It was in this brooding, clouded, and unforgiving state of mind that Frederick Lee took his way homeward. On entering his dwelling, which he did almost noiselessly, he went into the parlour and seated himself in the very place where he was sitting when Kate began, so unexpectedly to him, her unsuccessful work of reformation. Every thing around reminded him of that unfortunate evening—even the lounging position he so naturally assumed, sliding down, as he did, in the chair, and throwing one of his legs over the arm.

"It is comfortable for me," said he, moodily to himself; "and it's my own house. If she don't like it, let her——"

He did not finish the sentence, for he felt that his state of mind was not what it should be, and that to speak thus of his wife was neither just nor kind.

Unhappy young man! Is it thus you visit the light offence—for it was light, in reality—of the loving and gentle young creature who has given her happiness, her very life into your keeping? Could

you not bear a word from her? Are you so perfect, that her eyes must see no defect? Is she never to dare, on penalty of your stern displeasure, to correct a fault—to seek to lift you, by her purer and better taste, above the ungraceful and unmanly habits consequent upon a neglected boyhood? What if her hand was laid rather heavily upon you? What if her feelings did prompt her to use words that had better been left unsaid? It was the young wife's pride in her husband that warmed her into undue excitement, and this you should have at once comprehended.

If Frederick Lee did not think precisely as we have written, his thoughts gradually inclined in that direction. Still he felt moody, and his feelings warmed but little toward Kate.

Thus he sat for some ten or fifteen minutes. At the end of this time, he heard light footsteps coming down the stairs. He knew them to be those of his wife. He did not move nor make a sound, but rather crouched lower in his chair, the back of which was turned toward the door. But his thought was on his wife. He saw her with the eyes of his mind—saw her with her clouded countenance. His heart throbbed heavily against his side, and he partially held his breath.

Now her footsteps moved along the passage, and now he was conscious that she had entered the room where he sat. Not the slightest movement did he make—not a sign did he give of his presence. There he sat, shrinking down in his chair, moody, gloomy, and angry with Kate in his heart.

Was she aware of his presence? Had she heard

him enter the house? Such were the questioning thoughts that were in his mind.

Footsteps moved across the room. Now Kate was at the mantel-piece, a few feet from the chair he occupied, for he heard her lay a book thereon. Now she passed to the back window, and throwing it up, pushed open the shutters, giving freer entrance to the waning light.

A deep silence followed. Now the stillness is broken by a gentle sigh that floats faintly through the room. How rebukingly smote that sigh upon the ears of Lee! How it softened his heart toward Kate, the young and loving wife of his bosom! A slower movement in the current of his angry feelings succeeds to this. Then it becomes still. There is a pause.

But where is Kate? Has she left the room? He listens for some movement, but not the slightest sound meets his ear.

"Kate!" No, he did not utter the word aloud, in tender accents, though it was in his heart and on his tongue. Nor did he start up or move. No, as if spell-bound, he remained crouching down in his chair.

All at once he is conscious that some one is bending above him, and, in the next moment, warm lips touch his forehead, gently, hesitatingly, yet with a lingering pressure.

"Kate! Dear Kate!"

He has sprung to his feet, and his arms are flung around his wife.

"Forgive me, Frederick, if I seemed unkind to you," sobbed Kate, as soon as she could command

her voice. "There was no unkindness in my heart —only love."

"It is I who most need to ask forgiveness," replied Lee. "I who have——"

"Hush! Not a word of that now," quickly returned Kate, placing her hand upon his mouth. "Let the past be forgotten."

"And forgiven, too," said Lee, as he pressed his lips eagerly to those of his wife.

How happy they were at this moment of reconciliation! How light seemed the causes which had risen up to mar the beautiful harmony of their lives! How weak and foolish both had been, as their acts now appeared in eyes from which had fallen the scales of passion!

Both were wiser than in the aforetime. Kate tried to look away, as much as possible, from the little faults which at first so much annoyed her; while her husband turned his thoughts more narrowly upon himself, at the same time that he made observation of other men, and was soon well convinced that sundry changes in his habits and manners might be made with great advantage. The more his eyes were opened to these little personal defects, the more fully did he forgive Kate for having in the beginning laid her hand upon them, though not in the gentlest manner.

"Six months have passed since you were married," said Mrs. Morton one day to Kate.

"Yes, six months have flown on wings of perfume," replied the happy wife.

"I saw Frederick yesterday."

"Did you?"

"Yes; and I knew him the moment my eyes rested upon him."

"Knew him! Why shouldn't you know him?"

Kate looked a little surprised.

"I thought he was to be so changed under your hands in six months, that I would hardly recognise him."

There was an arch look in Mrs. Morton's eyes, and a merry flutter in her voice.

"Mrs. Morton! Now that is too bad!"

"Your experiment failed, did it not, dear?"

The door of the room in which the ladies were sitting opened at the moment, and Frederick Lee entered.

"Not entirely," whispered Kate, as she bent to the ear of her friend. "He is vastly improved—at least, in my eyes."

"And in others' eyes, too," thought Mrs. Morton, as she arose and returned the young man's smiling salutation.

"MY FORTUNE'S MADE."

My young friend, Cora Lee, was a gay, dashing girl, fond of dress, and looking always as if, to use a common saying, just out of a bandbox. Cora was a belle, of course, and had many admirers. Among the number of these, was a young man named Edward Douglass, who was the very "pink" of neatness in all matters pertaining to dress, and exceedingly particular in his observance of the little proprieties of life.

I saw, from the first, that if Douglass pressed his suit, Cora's heart would be an easy conquest, and so it proved.

"How admirably they are fitted for each other!" I remarked to my husband, on the night of their wedding. "Their tastes are similar, and their habits so much alike, that no violence will be done to the feelings of either in the more intimate associations that marriage brings. Both are neat in person and orderly by instinct, and both have good principles."

"From all present appearances, the match will be a good one," replied my husband. There was, I thought, something like reservation in his tone.

"Do you really think so?" I said, a little ironically, for Mr. Smith's approval of the marriage was hardly warm enough to suit my fancy.

"Oh, certainly! Why not?" he replied.

I felt a little fretted at my husband's mode of speaking, but made no further remark on the subject. He is never very enthusiastic nor sanguine, and did not mean, in this instance, to doubt the fitness of the parties for happiness in the marriage state—as I half imagined. For myself, I warmly approved of my friend's choice, and called her husband a lucky man to secure, for his companion through life, a woman so admirably fitted to make one like him happy. But a visit which I paid to Cora one day about six weeks after the honeymoon had expired, lessened my enthusiasm on the subject, and awoke some unpleasant doubts. It happened that I called soon after breakfast. Cora met me in the parlour, looking like a very fright. She wore a soiled and rumpled morning wrapper; her hair was in papers; and she had on dirty stockings, and a pair of old slippers down at the heels.

"Bless me, Cora!" said I. "What is the matter? Have you been sick?"

"No. Why do you ask? Is my dishabille rather on the extreme?"

"Candidly, I think it is, Cora," was my frank answer.

"Oh, well! No matter," she carelessly replied, "my fortune's made."

"I don't clearly understand you," said I.

"I'm married, you know."

"Yes; I am aware of that fact."

"No need of being so particular in dress now."

"Why not?"

"Didn't I just say?" replied Cora. 'My fortune's made. I've got a husband."

Beneath an air of jesting, was apparent the real earnestness of my friend

"You dressed with a careful regard to taste and neatness, in order to win Edward's love?" said I.

"Certainly I did."

"And should you not do the same in order to retain it?"

"Why, Mrs. Smith! Do you think my husband's affection goes no deeper than my dress? I should be very sorry indeed to think that. He loves me for myself."

"No doubt of that in the world, Cora. But remember that he cannot see what is in your mind except by what you do or say. If he admires your taste, for instance, it is not from any abstract appreciation thereof, but because the taste manifests itself in what you do. And, depend upon it, he will find it a very hard matter to approve and admire your correct taste in dress, for instance, when you appear before him, day after day, in your present unattractive attire. If you do not dress well for your husband's eyes, for whose eyes, pray, do you dress? You are as neat when abroad as you were before your marriage."

"As to that, Mrs. Smith, common decency requires me to dress well when I go upon the street or into company, to say nothing of the pride one naturally feels in looking well."

"And does not the same common decency and natural pride argue as strongly in favour of your dressing well at home, and for the eye of your husband, whose approval and whose admiration must

be dearer to you than the approval and admiration of the whole world?"

"But he doesn't want to see me rigged out in silks and satins all the time. A pretty bill my dressmaker would have against him! Edward has more sense than that, I flatter myself."

"Street or ball-room attire is one thing, Cora, and becoming home apparel another. We look for both in their places."

Thus I argued with the thoughtless young wife, but my words made no impression. When abroad, she dressed with exquisite taste, and was lovely to look upon; but at home, she was careless and slovenly, and made it almost impossible for those who saw her to realize that she was the brilliant beauty they had met in company but a short time before. But even this did not last long. I noticed, after a few months, that the habits of home were confirming themselves, and becoming apparent abroad. Her "fortune was made," and why should she now waste time or employ her thoughts about matters of personal appearance?

The habits of Mr. Douglass, on the contrary, did not change. He was as orderly as before, and dressed with the same regard to neatness. He never appeared at the breakfast-table in the morning without being shaved; nor did he lounge about in the evening in his shirt-sleeves. The slovenly habits into which Cora had fallen annoyed him seriously; and still more so, when her carelessness about her appearance began to manifest itself abroad as well as at home. When he hinted any thing on the subject, she did not hesitate to reply, in a jesting

manner, that her fortune was made. and she need not trouble herself any longer about how she looked.

Douglass did not feel very much complimented; but as he had his share of good sense, he saw that to assume a cold and offended manner would do no good.

"If your fortune is made, so is mine," he replied on one occasion, quite coolly and indifferently. Next morning he made his appearance at the breakfast table with a beard of twenty-four hours' growth.

"You haven't shaved this morning, dear," said Cora, to whose eyes the dirty-looking face of her husband was particularly unpleasant.

"No," he replied, carelessly. "It's a serious trouble to shave every day."

"But you look so much better with a cleanly-shaved face."

"Looks are nothing—ease and comfort every thing," said Douglass.

"But common decency, Edward."

"I see nothing indecent in a long beard," replied the husband.

Still Cora argued, but in vain. Her husband went off to his business with his unshaven face.

"I don't know whether to shave or not," said Douglass next morning, running his hand over his rough face, upon which was a beard of forty-eight hours' growth. His wife had hastily thrown on a wrapper, and, with slip-shod feet and head like a mop, was lounging in a large rocking-chair, awaiting the breakfast-bell.

"For mercy's sake, Edward, don't go any longer

with that shockingly dirty face," spoke up Cora. "If you knew how dreadfully you look!"

"Looks are nothing," replied Edward, stroking his beard.

"Why, what's come over you all at once?"

"Nothing; only it's such a trouble to shave every day."

"But you didn't shave yesterday."

"I know; I am just as well off to-day as if I had. So much saved, at any rate."

But Cora urged the matter, and her husband finally yielded, and mowed down the luxuriant growth of beard.

"How much better you do look!" said the young wife. "Now don't go another day without shaving."

"But why should I take so much trouble about mere looks? I'm just as good with a long beard as with a short one. It's a great deal of trouble to shave every day. You can love me just as well; and why need I care about what others say or think?"

On the following morning, Douglass appeared not only with a long beard, but with a bosom and collar that were both soiled and rumpled.

"Why, Edward! How you do look!" said Cora. "You've neither shaved nor put on a clean shirt."

Edward stroked his face and run his fingers along the edge of his collar, remarking, indifferently, as he did so—

"It's no matter. I look well enough. This being so very particular in dress is waste of time, and I'm getting tired of it."

And in this trim Douglass went off to his busi-

ness, much to the annoyance of his wife, who could not bear to see her husband looking so slovenly.

Gradually the declension from neatness went on, until Edward was quite a match for his wife; and yet, strange to say, Cora had not taken the hint, broad as it was. In her own person she was as untidy as ever.

About six months after their marriage, we invited a few friends to spend a social evening with us, Cora and her husband among the number. Cora came alone, quite early, and said that her husband was very much engaged, and could not come until after tea. My young friend had not taken much pains with her attire. Indeed, her appearance mortified me, as it contrasted so decidedly with that of the other ladies who were present; and I could not help suggesting to her that she was wrong in being so indifferent about her dress. But she laughingly replied to me—

"You know my fortune's made now, Mrs. Smith. I can afford to be negligent in these matters. It's a great waste of time to dress so much."

I tried to argue against this, but could make no impression upon her.

About an hour after tea, and while we were all engaged in pleasant conversation, the door of the parlour opened, and in walked Mr. Douglass. At first glance I thought I must be mistaken. But no, it was Edward himself. But what a figure he did cut! His uncombed hair was standing up, in stiff spikes, in a hundred different directions; his face could not have felt the touch of a razor for two or three days; and he was guiltless of clean linen for

at least the same length of time. His vest was soiled; his boots unblacked; and there was an unmistakable hole in one of his elbows.

"Why, Edward!" exclaimed his wife, with a look of mortification and distress, as her husband came across the room, with a face in which no consciousness of the figure he cut could be detected.

"Why, my dear fellow! What is the matter?" said my husband, frankly; for he perceived that the ladies were beginning to titter, and that the gentlemen were looking at each other, and trying to repress their risible tendencies; and therefore deemed it best to throw off all reserve on the subject.

"The matter? Nothing's the matter, I believe. Why do you ask?" Douglass looked grave.

"Well may he ask, what's the matter?" broke in Cora, energetically. "How could you come here in such a plight?"

"In such a plight?" And Edward looked down at himself, felt his beard, and ran his fingers through his hair. "What's the matter? Is any thing wrong?"

"You look as if you'd just waked up from a nap of a week with your clothes on, and come off without washing your face or combing your hair," said my husband.

"Oh!" And Edward's countenance brightened a little. Then he said with much gravity of manner—

"I've been extremely hurried of late; and only left my store a few minutes ago. I hardly thought it worth while to go home to dress up. I knew we were all friends here. Besides, *as my fortune is made*"—and he glanced with a look not to be mis-

taken toward his wife—"I don't feel called upon to give as much attention to mere dress as formerly. Before I was married, it was necessary to be particular in these matters, but now it's of no consequence."

I turned toward Cora. Her face was like crimson. In a few moments she arose and went quickly from the room. I followed her, and Edward came after us pretty soon. He found his wife in tears, and sobbing almost hysterically.

"I've got a carriage at the door," said he to me, aside, half laughing, half serious. "So help her on with her things, and we'll retire in disorder."

"But it's too bad in you, Mr. Douglass," replied I.

"Forgive me for making your house the scene of this lesson to Cora," he whispered. "It had to be given, and I thought I could venture to trespass upon your forbearance."

"I'll think about that," said I, in return.

In a few minutes Cora and her husband retired, and in spite of good breeding and every thing else, we all had a hearty laugh over the matter, on my return to the parlour, where I explained the curious little scene that had just occurred.

How Cora and her husband settled the affair between themselves, I never inquired. But one thing is certain, I never saw her in a slovenly dress afterward, at home or abroad. She was cured.

THE GOOD MATCH.

"My heart is now at rest," remarked Mrs. Presstman to her sister, Mrs. Markland. "Florence has done so well. The match is such a good one."

Mrs. Presstman spoke with animation, but her sister's countenance remained rather grave.

"Mr. Barker is worth at least eighty thousand dollars," resumed Mrs. Presstman. "And my husband says, that if he prospers in business as he has done for the last ten years, he will be the richest merchant in the city. Don't you think we have been fortunate in marrying Florence so well?"

"So far as the securing of wealth goes, Florence has certainly done very well," returned Mrs. Markland. "But, surely, sister, you have a higher idea of marriage than to suppose that wealth in a husband is the primary thing. The quality of his mind is of much more importance."

"Oh, certainly, that is not to be lost sight of. Mr. Barker is an excellent man. Every one speaks well of him. No one stands higher in the community than he does."

"That may be. But the general estimation in which a man is held does not, by any means, determine his fitness to become the husband of one like Florence. I think that when I was here last spring,

there was some talk of her preference for a young physician. Was such really the case?"

"There was something of that kind," replied Mrs. Presstman, the colour becoming a very little deeper on her cheek—"a foolish notion of the girl's. But that was broken off long ago. It would not do. We could not afford to let her marry a young doctor with a poor practice. We knew her to be worthy something much higher, as the result has shown."

"Doctor Estill, I believe, was his name?"

"Yes."

"I remember him very well—and liked him much. Was Mr. Barker preferred by Florence to Doctor Estill?"

"Why, yes—no—not at first," half-stammered Mrs. Presstman. "That is, you know, she was foolish, like all young girls, and thought she loved him. But that passed away. She is now as happy as she can be."

Mrs. Markland felt that it was not exactly right to press this matter now that the mischief, if any there were, had been done, and so remarked no further upon the subject. But the admission made in her sister's reply to her last question pained her. It corroborated a suspicion that crossed her mind, when she saw her niece, that all was not right within—that the good match which had been made was only good in appearance. She had loved Florence for the innocence, purity, and elevation of soul that so sweetly characterized her. She knew her to be susceptible of tender impressions, and capable of loving deeply an object really worthy of her love. This plant had been, she feared, removed from the warm

green-house of home, where the earth had touched tenderly its delicate roots, while its leaves put forth in a genial air, and placed in a hard soil and a chilling atmosphere, still to live on, but with its beauty and fragrance gone. She might be mistaken. But appearances troubled her.

Mrs. Markland lived in a neighbouring city, and was on a visit to her sister. During the two weeks that elapsed, while paying this visit, she heard a great deal about the excellent match that Florence had made. No one of the acquaintances of the family had any thing to say that was not congratulatory. More than one mother of an unmarried daughter, she had good cause for concluding, envied her sister the happiness of having the rich Mr. Barker for a son-in-law. When she parted with her niece, on the eve of her return home, there were tears in her mild blue eyes. It was natural—for Florence loved her aunt, and to part with her was painful. Still, those tears troubled Mrs. Markland. She thought of them hours, and days, and months after, as a token that all was not right in her gentle breast.

Briefly let us now sketch a scene that passed twenty years from this period. Twenty years! That is a long time. Yes—but it is a period that tests the truth or falsity of the leading principles with which we set out in life. Twenty years! Ah! how many, even long before that time elapses, prove the fallaciousness of their hopes! discover the sandy foundation upon which they have built!

Let us introduce Mrs. Barker. Her husband has realized even more than he had hoped for, in the item of wealth. He is worth a million.

Rather a small sum in his eye, it is true, now that he possesses it. And from this very fact, its smallness, he is not happy—for is not Mr. T—— worth three millions of dollars? Mr. T——, who is no better, if as good as he is? But what of Mrs. Barker? Ah, yes. Let us see how time has passed with her. Let us see if the hours have danced along with her to measures of glad music, or in cadence with a pensive strain. Has hers indeed been a *good match?* We shall see.

Is that sedate-looking woman, with such a cold expression upon her face, who sits in that elaborately furnished saloon, or parlour, dreamily looking into the glowing grate, Mrs. Barker? Yes, that is the woman who made a *good match.* Can this indeed be so? I see, in imagination, a gentle, loving creature, whose eyes and ears are open to all things beautiful in creation, and whose heart is moved by all that is good and true. Impelled by the very nature into which she has been born—woman's nature—her spirit yearns for high, holy, interior companionship. She enters into that highest, holiest, most interior relationship—marriage. She must be purely happy. Is this so? Can the woman we have introduced at the end of twenty years be the same being with this gentle girl? Alas! that we should have it to say that it is so. There has been no affliction to produce this change—no misfortune. The children she has borne are all about her, and wealth has been poured liberally into her lap. No external wish has been ungratified. Why, then, should her face wear habitually so strange an expression as it does?

She had been seated for more than half an hour

in an abstract mood, when some one came in. She knew the step. It was that of her husband. But she did not turn to him, nor seem conscious of his presence. He merely glanced toward his wife, and then sat down at some distance from her, and took up a newspaper. Thus they remained until a bell announced the evening meal, when both arose and passed in silence to the tea-room. There they were joined by their four children, the eldest at that lovely age when the girl has blushed into young womanhood. All arranged themselves about the table, the younger children conversing together in an under tone, but the father, and mother, and Florence, the oldest child, remaining silent, abstracted, and evidently unhappy from some cause.

The mother and daughter eat but little, and that compulsorily. After the meal was finished, the latter retired to her own apartment, the other children remained with their books in the family sitting-room, and Mr. and Mrs. Barker returned to the parlour.

"I am really out of all patience with you and Florence!" the former said, angrily, as he seated himself beside his wife, in front of the grate. "One would think some terrible calamity were about to happen."

Mrs. Barker made no reply to this. In a moment or two her husband went on, in a dogmatical tone.

"It's the very best match the city affords. Show me another in any way comparable. Is not Lorimer worth at least two millions?—and is not Harman his only son and heir? Surely you and the girl must both be beside yourselves to think of objecting for a single moment."

"A good match is not always made so by wealth," Mrs. Barker returned, in a firm voice, compressing her lips tightly, as she closed the brief sentence.

"You are beside yourself," said the husband, half sneeringly.

"Perhaps I am," somewhat meekly replied Mrs. Barker. Then becoming suddenly excited from the quick glancing of certain thoughts through her mind, she retorted angrily. Her husband did not hesitate to reply in a like spirit. Then ensued a war of words, which ended in a positive declaration that Florence should marry Harman Lorimer. At this the mother burst into tears and left the room.

After that declaration was made, Mrs. Barker knew that further opposition on her part was useless. Florence was gradually brought over by the force of angry threats, persuasions, and arguments, so as finally to consent to become the wife of a man from whom her heart turned with instinctive aversion. But every one called it such a good match, and congratulated the father and mother upon the fortunate issue.

What Mrs. Barker suffered before, during, and after the brilliant festivities that accompanied her tenderly-loved daughter's sacrifice, cannot all be known. Her own heart's history for twenty long years came up before her, and every page of that history she read over, with a weeping spirit, as the history of her sweet child for the dreary future. How many a leaf in her heart had been touched by the frost; had withered, shrunk, and dropped from affection's stem—how many a bud had failed to show its promised petals—how many a blossom had drooped

and died ere the tender germ in its bosom could come forth into hardy existence. Inanimate golden leaves, and buds, and blossoms—nay, even fruits were a poor substitute for these. A woman's heart cannot be satisfied with them.

In her own mind, obduracy and coldness had supervened to the first states of disappointed affection. But her heart had rebelled through long, long years against the violence to which it had been subjected—and the calmness, or rather indifference, that at last followed was only like ice upon the surface of a stream—the water still flowing on beneath. Death to the mother would have been a willing sacrifice, could it have saved her child from the living death that she had suffered. But it would not. The father was a resolute tyrant. Money was his god, and to that god he offered up even his child in sacrifice.

Need the rambling hints contained in this brief sketch—this dim outline—be followed by any enforcing reflections? An opposite picture, full of light and warmth, might be drawn, but would it tend to bring the truth to clearer perception, where mothers—true mothers—mothers in spirit as well as in name—are those to whom we hold up the first picture? We think not.

Wealth, reputation, honours, high intelligence in a man—all or either of these—do not constitute him a good match for your child. Marriage is of the heart—the blending of affection with affection, and thought with thought. How, then, can one who loves all that is innocent, and pure, and holy, become interiorly conjoined with a man who is a gross,

selfish sensualist? a man who finds happiness only in the external possession of wealth, or honours, or in the indulgence of luxuries? It is impossible! Take away these, and give her, in their stead, one with whom her affections can blend in perfect harmony—one with whom she can become united as one—and earth will be to her a little heaven.

In the opposite course, alas! the evil does not always stop with your own child. The curse is too often continued unto the third and fourth generation—yea, even through long succeeding ages—to eternity itself! Who can calculate the evil that may flow from a single perversion of the marriage union—that is, a marriage entered into from other than the true motives? None but God himself!

THE BROTHER'S TEMPTATION.

"Come, Henry," said Blanche Armour to her brother, who had seemed unusually silent and thoughtful since tea time,—"I want you to read while I make this cap for ma."

"Excuse me, Blanche, if you please, I don't feel like reading to-night," the brother replied, shading his face both from the light and the penetrating glance of his sister, as he spoke.

Blanche did not repeat the request, for it was a habit with her never to urge her brother; nor, indeed, any one, to do a thing for which he seemed disinclined. She, therefore, took her work-basket, and sat down by the centre-table, without saying any thing farther, and commenced sewing. But she did not feel quite easy, for it was too apparent that Henry was disturbed about something. For several days he had seemed more than usually reserved and thoughtful. Now he was gloomy as well as thoughtful. Of course, there was a cause for this. And as this cause was hidden from Blanche, she could not but feel troubled. Several times during the evening she attempted to draw him out into conversation, but he would reply to her in monosyllables, and then fall back into his state of silent abstraction of mind. Once or twice he got up and walked across the floor, and then again resumed his seat, as if he had compelled himself to sit down by

a strong effort of the will. Thus the time passed away, until the usual hour of retiring for the night came, when Blanche put up her work, and rising from her chair by the centre-table, went to Henry, and stooping down over him, as he lay half reclined upon the sofa, kissed him tenderly, and murmured an affectionate "good night."

"Good night, dear," he returned, without rising or adding another word.

Blanche lingered a moment, and then, with a repressed sigh, left the room, and retired to her chamber. She could not understand her brother's strange mood. For him to be troubled and silent was altogether new. And the cause? Why should he conceal it from her, toward whom, till now, he had never withheld any thing that gave him either pleasure or pain?

The moment Blanche retired, the whole manner of Henry Armour changed. He arose from the sofa and commenced walking the floor with rapid steps, while the deep lines upon his forehead and his strongly compressed lips showed him to be labouring under some powerful mental excitement. He continued to walk thus hurriedly backward and forward for the space of half an hour; when, as if some long debated point had been at last decided, he grasped the parlour door with a firm hand, threw it open, took from the rack his hat, cloak, and cane, and in a few moments was in the street.

The jar of the street door, as it closed, was distinctly heard by Blanche, and this caused the troubled feeling which had oppressed her all the evening, to change into one of anxiety. Where could

Henry be going at this late hour? He rarely stayed out beyond ten o'clock; and she had never before known him to leave the house after the usual bed-time of the family. His going out had, of course, something to do with his unhappy mood. What could it mean? She could not suspect him of any wrong. She knew him to be too pure-minded and honourable. But there was mystery connected with his conduct—and this troubled her. She had just laid aside a book, that she had taken up for the purpose of reading a few pages before retiring for the night, and commenced disrobing herself, when the sound of the door closing after her brother startled her, and caused her to pause and think. She could not now retire, for to sleep would be impossible. She, therefore, drew a shawl about her, and again resumed her book, determined to sit up until Henry's return. But little that she read made a very distinct impression on her mind. Her thoughts were with her brother, whom she tenderly loved, and had learned to confide in as one of pure sentiments and firm principles.

While Henry Armour still lingered at home in moody indecision of mind, a small party of young men were assembled in an upper room of a celebrated refectory, drinking, smoking, and indulging in conversation, a large portion of which would have shocked a modest ear. They were all members of wealthy and respectable families. Some had passed their majority, and others still lingered between nineteen and twenty-one,—that dangerous age for a young man—especially if he be so unfortunate as to have little to do, and a liberal supply of pocket money.

"Confound the fellow! What keeps him so long?" said one of the company, looking at his watch "It's nearly ten o'clock, and he has not made his appearance."

"Whom do you mean? Armour?" asked another.

"Certainly I do. He promised to join us again to-night."

"So he did! But I'll bet a pewter sixpence he won't come."

"Why?"

"His sister won't let him. Don't you know that he is tied to her apron string almost every night, the silly fellow! Why don't he be a man, and enjoy life as it goes?"

"Sure enough! What is life worth, if its pleasures are all to be sacrificed for a sister?" returned the other, sneeringly.

"Here! Pass that champagne," interrupted one of the company. "Let Harry Armour break his engagement for a sister if he likes. That needn't mar our enjoyment. There are enough of us here for a regular good time."

"Here's a toast," cried another, as he lifted a sparkling glass to his lips—"Pleasant dreams to the old folks!"

"Good! Good! Good!" passed round the table, about which the young revellers were gathered, and each drained a glass to the well understood sentiment.

In the mean time, young Armour had left his home, having decided at last, and after a long struggle with himself, to join this gay company, as he had agreed to do. It was, in fact, a little club,

formed a short time previous, the members of which met once a week to eat, drink, smoke, and corrupt each other by ridiculing those salutary moral restraints which, once laid aside, leave the thoughtless youth in imminent danger of ruin.

Henry Armour had been blessed with a sister a year or two older than himself, who loved him tenderly. The more rapid development of her mind, as well as body, had given her the appearance of maturity that enabled her to exercise a strong influence over him. Of the dangers that beset the path of a young man, she knew little or nothing. The constant effort which she made to render home agreeable to her brother by consulting his tastes, and entering into every thing that seemed to give him pleasure, did not, therefore, spring from a wish to guard him from the world's allurements; it was the spontaneous result of a pure fraternal affection. But it had the right effect. To him, there was no place like home; nor any smile so alluring, or voice so sweet, as his sister's. And abroad, no company possessed a perfect charm, unless Blanche were one of its members.

This continued until Henry gained his twenty-second year, when, as a law student, he found himself thrown more and more into the company of young men of his own age, and the same standing in society. An occasional ride out with one and another of these, at which times an hour at least was always spent in a public house, opened to him new scenes in life, and for a young man of lively, buoyant mind, not altogether unattractive. That there was danger in these paths he did not attempt to

disguise from himself. More than one, or two, or three, whom he met on almost every visit he made to a fashionable resort for young men, about five miles from the city, showed too strong indications of having passed beyond the bounds of self-control, as well in their use of wines and stronger drinks as in their conduct, which was too free from those external decent restraints that we look for even in men who make no pretensions to virtue. But he did not fear for himself. The exhibitions which these made of themselves instinctively disgusted him. Still, he did not perceive that he was less and less shocked at some things he beheld, and more than at first inclined to laugh at follies which verged too nearly upon moral delinquencies.

Gradually his circle of acquaintance with young men of the gay class extended, and a freer participation with them in many of their pleasures came as a natural consequence.

"Come," said one of them to him, as the two met in the street, by accident, one evening,—"I want you to go with me."

"But why should I go with you? Or, rather, where are you going?" asked Armour.

"To meet some of our friends down at C——'s," replied the young man.

"What are you going to do there?" farther inquired Armour.

"Nothing more than to drink a glass of wine, and have some pleasant chit-chat. So come along."

"Will I be welcome?"

"Certainly you will. I'll guarantee that. Some half dozen of us have formed a little club, and each

member has the privilege of inviting any one he pleases. To-night I invite you, and on the next evening I expect to see you present, not as a guest, but as a member. So come along, and see how you like us."

Armour had no definite object in view. He had walked out, because he felt rather listless at home, Blanche having retired with a sick headache. It required, therefore, no persuasion to induce him to yield to the friend's invitation. Arrived at C——'s, a fashionable house of refreshment, the two young men passed up stairs and entered one of the private apartments of the house, which they found handsomely furnished and brilliantly lighted. In this, gathered around a circular, or rather oblong table, were five or six young men, nearly all of them well known to Armour. On the table were bottles of wine and glasses—the latter filled.

"Just in time!" cried the president of the club. "Henry Armour, I bid you welcome! Here's a place waiting for you," placing his hand upon a chair by his side as he spoke. "And now," as Armour seated himself, "let me fill your glass. We were waiting for a sentiment to find its way out of some brain as you came in, and our brimming glasses had stood untasted for more than a minute. Can't you help us to a toast?"

"Here's to good fellowship!" said Armour, promptly lifting his glass, and touching it to that of the president.

"To be drunk standing," added the president.

All rose on the instant, and drank with mock solemnity to the sentiment of their guest.

Then followed brilliant flashes of wit, or what was thought to be wit. To these succeeded the song, the jest, the story,—and to these again the sparkling wine-cup. Gayly thus passed the hours, until midnight stole quietly upon the thoughtless revellers. Surprised, on reference to his watch, to find that it was one o'clock, Armour arose and begged to be excused.

"I move that our guest be excused on one condition," said the friend who had brought him to the company. "And that is, on his promise to meet with us again, on this evening next week."

"What do you think of the condition?" asked the president, who, like nearly all of the rest, was rather the worse for the wine he had taken, looking at Armour as he spoke.

"I agree to it with pleasure," was the prompt reply.

"Another drink before you go, then," said the president, "and I will give the toast. Fill up your glasses."

The bottle again passed round the table.

"Here's to a good fellow!" was the sentiment announced. It was received standing. Armour then retired with bewildered senses. The gay scene that had floated before his eyes, and in which himself had been an actor, and the freedom with which he had taken wine, left him confused, almost in regard to his own identity. He did not seem to himself the same person he had been a few hours before. A new world had opened before him, and he had, almost involuntarily, entered into, and become a citizen of that world. Long after he had reached his

home, and retired to his bed, did his imagination revel amid the scenes he had just left. In sleep, too, fancy was busy. But here came a change. Serpents would too often glide across the table around which the gay company, himself a member, were assembled; or some other sudden and more appalling change scatter into fragments the bright phantasma of his dreams.

The sober morning found him in a soberer mood. Calm, cold, unimpassioned reflection came. What had he been doing? What path had he entered; and whither did it lead? These were questions that would intrude themselves, and clamour for an answer. He shut his eyes and endeavoured again to sleep. Waking thoughts were worse than the airy terrors which had visited him in sleep. At length he arose, with dull pains in his head, and an oppressive sluggishness of the whole body. But more painful than his own reflections, or the physical consequences of the last night's irregularity, was the thought of meeting Blanche, and bearing the glance of her innocent eyes. He felt that he had been among the impure, —and worse, that he had enjoyed their impure sentiments, and indulged with them in excess of wine. The taint was upon him, and the pure mind of his sister must instinctively perceive it. These thoughts made him wretched. He really dreaded to meet her. But this could not be avoided.

"You do not look well, brother," said Blanche, almost as soon as she saw him.

"I am not well," he replied, avoiding her steady look. "My head aches, and I feel dull and heavy."

"What has caused it, brother?" the affectionate girl asked, with a look and voice of real concern.

Now this was, of all others, the question that Henry was least prepared to answer. He could not utter a direct falsehood. From that his firm principles shrunk. Nor could he equivocate, for he considered equivocation little better than a direct falsehood. "Why should I wish to conceal any part of my conduct from her?" he asked himself, in his dilemma. But the answer was instant and conclusive. His participation in the revelry of the last night was a thing not to be whispered in her ear. Not being prepared, then, to tell the truth, and shrinking from falsehood and equivocation, Armour preferred silence as the least evil of the three. The question of Blanche was not, therefore, answered. At the breakfast-table, his father and mother remarked upon his appearance. To this, he merely replied that he was not well. As soon as the meal was over, he went out, glad to escape the eye of Blanche, which, it seemed to him, rested searchingly upon him all the while.

A walk of half an hour in the fresh morning air dispelled the dull pain in his head, and restored his whole system to a more healthy tone. This drove away, to some extent, the oppressive feeling of self-condemnation he had indulged. The scenes of the previous evening, though silly enough for sensible young men to engage in, seemed less objectionable than they had appeared to him on his first review. To laugh involuntarily at several remembered jests and stories, the points of which were not exactly the most chaste or reverential, marked the change that

a short period had produced in his state of mind. During that day, he did not fall in with any of his wild companions of the last evening, too many of whom had already fairly entered the road to ruin. The evening was spent at home, in the society of Blanche. He read while she sewed, or he turned for her the leaves of her music book, or accompanied her upon the flute while she played him a favourite air upon the piano. Conversation upon books, music, society, and other topics of interest, filled up the time not occupied in these mental recreations, and added zest, variety, and unflagging interest to the gently-passing hours. On the next evening they attended a concert, and on the next a party. On that succeeding, Henry went out to see a friend of a different character from any of those with whom he had passed the hours a few nights previous—a friend about his own age, of fixed habits and principles, who, like himself, was preparing for the bar. With him he spent a more rational evening than with the others, and, what was better, no sting was left behind.

Still, young Armour could never think of the "club" without having his mind thrown into a tumult. It awoke into activity opposing principles. Good and evil came in contact, and battled for supremacy. There was in his mind a clear conviction that to indulge in dissipation of that character, would be injurious both to moral and physical health. And yet, having tasted of the delusive sweets, he was tempted to further indulgence Meeting with ome two or three of the "members' during the week, and listening to their extravagant praise of

the "club," and the pleasure of uniting in unrestrained social intercourse, made warm by generous wine, tended to make more active the contest going on within—for the good principles that had been stored up in his mind were not to be easily silenced. Their hold upon his character was deep. They had entered into its warp and woof, and were not to be eradicated or silenced in a moment. As the time for the next meeting of the club approached, this battle grew more violent. The condition into which it had brought him by the arrival of the night on which he had promised again to join his gay friends, the reader has already seen. He was still unable to decide his course of action. Inclination prompted him to go; good principles opposed. "But then I have passed my word that I would go, and my word must be inviolable." Here reason came in to the aid of his inclinations, and made in their favour a strong preponderance.

We have seen that, yet undecided, he lingered at home, but in a state of mind strangely different from any in which his sister had ever seen him. Still debating the question, he lay, half reclined upon the sofa, when Blanche touched her innocent lips to his, and murmured a tender good-night. That kiss passed through his frame like an electric current. It came just as his imagination had pictured an impure image, and scattered it instantly. But no decision of the question had yet been made, and the withdrawal of Blanche only took off an external restraint from his feelings. He quietly arose and commenced pacing the floor. This he continued for some time. At last the decision was made.

"I have passed my word, and that ends it," said he, and instantly left the house. Without permitting himself to review the matter again, although a voice within asked loudly to be heard, he walked hastily in the direction of the club-room. In ten minutes he gained the door, opened it without pausing, and stood in the midst of the wild company within. His entrance was greeted with shouts of welcome, and the toast, "Here's to a good fellow!" with which he had parted from them, was repeated on his return, all standing as it was drunk.

To this followed a sentiment that cannot be repeated here. It was too gross. All drunk to it but Armour. He could not, for it involved a foul slander upon the other sex, and he had a sister whose pure kiss was yet warm upon his lips. The individual who proposed the toast marked this omission, and pointed it out by saying—

"What's the matter, Harry? Is not the wine good?"

The colour mounted to the young man's face as he replied, with a forced smile—

"Yes, much better than the sentiment."

"What ails the sentiment?" asked the propounder of it, in a tone of affected surprise.

"I have a sister," was the brief, firm reply of Armour.

"So Charley, here, was just saying," retorted the other, with a merry laugh; "and, what is more, that he'd bet a sixpence you were tied to her apron-string, and would not be here to-night! Ha! ha!"

The effect of this upon the mind of Armour was decisive. He loved, nay, almost revered his sister.

She had been like an angel of innocence about his path from early years. He knew her to be as pure as the mountain snow-flake. And yet that sister's influence over him was sneered at by one who had just uttered a foul-mouthed slander upon her whole sex. The scales fell instantly from his eyes. He saw the dangerous ground upon which he stood; while the character of his associates appeared in a new light. They were on a road that he did not wish to travel. There were serpents concealed amid the flowers that sprung along their path, and he shuddered as he thought of their poisonous fangs. Quick as a flash of light, these things passed through his mind, and caused him to act with instant resolution. Rising from the chair he had already taken, he retired, without a word, from the room. A sneering laugh followed him, but he either heard it not or gave it no heed.

The book which Blanche resumed after she had heard her brother go out, soon ceased to interest her. She was too much troubled about him to be able to fix her mind on any thing else. His singularly disturbed state, and the fact of his having left the house at that late hour, caused her to feel great uneasiness. This was beginning to excite her imagination, and to cause her to fancy many reasons for his strange conduct, none of which were calculated in any degree to allay the anxiety she felt. Anxiety was fast verging upon serious alarm, when she heard the sound of footsteps approaching the house. She listened breathlessly. Surely it was the sound of Henry's footsteps! Yes! Yes! It was indeed her brother. The tears gushed from her

eyes as she heard him enter below and pass up to his chamber. He was safe from harm, and for this her heart lifted itself up in fervent thankfulness! How near he had been to falling, that pure-minded maiden never knew, nor how it had been her image and the remembrance of her parting kiss that had saved him in the moment of his greatest danger. Happy he who is blest with such a sister! And happier still, if her innocence be suffered to overshadow him in the hours of temptation!

THE HOME OF TASTE.

THERE are three words, in the utterance of which more power over the feelings is gained than in the utterance of any other words in the language. These are "Mother," "Home," and "Heaven." Each appeals to a different emotion—each bears influence over the heart from the cradle to the grave.—And just in the degree that this influence is active, are man's best interests secured for time and eternity.

Only of "home" do we here intend to speak; and, in particular, as to the influence of the home of taste. We hear much, in these days, of enlarging the sphere of woman's social duties; as if, in the sphere of home, nothing remained to be done, and she must either fold her hands in idleness, or step

forth to engage with man in life's sterner conflicts. But it is not true that our homes are as they might be, if their presiding genius fully comprehended all that was needed to make home what the word implies. Among those in poorer circumstances, this is especially so. They are too apt to regard matters of taste as mere superfluities; to speak lightly of order, neatness, and ornament; to think time and money spent on such things as useless. But this is a serious mistake, involving, often, the most lamentable consequences.

If we expect our children to grow up with a love for things pure and orderly, we must surround them with the representations thereof in the homes where first impressions are formed. The mind rests upon and is moulded by things external to a far greater extent than many suppose. These are not only a mirror, reflecting all that passes before the surface, but a highly sensitive mirror, that, like the Daguerreotype plate, retains the image it receives. If the image be orderly and beautiful, it will ever have power to excite orderly and beautiful thoughts in the mind; but if it be impure and disorderly, its lasting influence will be debasing. If you meet with a coarse, vulgar-minded man or woman, and are able to trace back the thread of life until the period of early years, you will be sure to find the existence of coarse and vulgar influences; and, in most cases, the opposite will alike be found to hold good.

There is no excuse for disorder in a household, no matter how small or how low the range of income, but idleness or indifference. The time required to maintain neatness, order, and cleanliness, is small,

if the will is active and the hands prompt. Every home, even the poorest, may become a home of taste, and present order and forms of beauty, if there is only a willing purpose in the mind.

It is often charged upon men—particularly operatives with low wages—that they do not love their homes, preferring to spend their evening hours in bar-rooms, or wandering about with other men as little attracted by the household sphere as themselves, until the time for rest. If you were to go into the homes of such, in most cases, you would hardly wonder at the aversion manifested. The dirty, disordered rooms, which their toiling wives deem it a waste of time and labour to make tidy and comfortable for their reception, it would be a perversion to call homes. Home attracts; but these repel. And so, with a feeling of discomfort, the men wander away, fall into temptation, and usually spend, in self-indulgence, money that otherwise would have gone to increase home comforts, if there had been any to increase. And so it is, in its degree, in the homes of every class. The more pleasant, orderly, and tasteful home is made, in all its departments and associations, the stronger is its attractive power, and the more potent its influence over those who are required to go forth into the world and meet its thousand allurements. If every thing is right there, it will surely draw them back, with a steady retraction, through all their absent moments, and they will feel, on repassing the threshold, that, in the wide, wide world, there is no spot to them so full of blessings.

What true woman does not aspire to be the genius of such a home?

THE TWO SYSTEMS.

"It's no use to talk; I can't do it. The idea of punishing a child in cold blood makes me shiver all over. I certainly think that, in the mind of any one who can do it, there must be a latent vein of cruelty."

This remark was made by Mrs. Stanley to her friend and visiter Mrs. Noland.

"I have known parents," she continued, "who would go about executing some punishment with a coolness and deliberation that to me was frightful. No promise, no appeal, no tear of alarm or agony, from the penitent little culprit, would have the least effect. The law must be fulfilled even to the jot and tittle."

"The disobedient child, doubtless, knew the law," remarked Mrs. Noland.

"Perhaps so. But even if it did, great allowance ought to be made for the ardor with which children seek the gratification of their desires, and the readiness with which they forget."

"No parent should lay down a law not right in itself; nor one obedience to which was not good for the child."

"But it is very hard to do this. We have not the

wisdom of Solomon. Every day, nay, almost every hour, we err in judgment; and especially in a matter so little understood as the management of children."

"Better, then, have very few laws, and them of the clearest kind. But, having them, implicit obedience should be exacted. At least, that is my rule."

"And you punish for every infraction?"

"Certainly. But, I am always sure that the child is fully aware of his fault, and let my punishment be graduated according to the wilfulness of the act."

"And you do this coolly?"

"Oh, yes. I never punish a child while I am excited with a feeling of indignation for the offence."

"If I waited for that to pass off, I could never punish one of my children."

"Do you find, under this system, that your children are growing up orderly and obedient?"

"No, indeed! Of course I do not. Who ever heard of orderly and obedient children? In fact, who would wish their children to be mere automatons? I am sure I would not. They are, by nature, restless, and impatient of control. It will not do to break down their young spirits. As for punishments, I don't believe much in them, any how. I have an idea that the less they are brought into requisition the better. They harden children. Kindness, long suffering, and forbearance will accomplish a great deal more, and in the end be better for the child."

At this moment a little fellow came sliding into the parlour, with a look that said plainly enough, "I know you don't want me here."

"Run out, Charley, dear," said Mrs. Stanley, in a mild voice.

But Charley did not seem to notice his mother's words, for he continued advancing toward her, until he was by her side, when he paused and looked the visiter steadily in the face.

"Charley, you must run out, my dear," said Mrs. Stanley, in a firmer and more decided voice.

But Charley only leaned heavily against his mother, not heeding in the smallest degree her words. Knowing how impossible it would be to get the child out of the room, without a resort to violence, Mrs. Stanley said no more to him, but continued the conversation with her friend. She had only spoken a few words, however, before Charley interrupted her by saying—

"Mother!—Mother!—Give me a piece of cake."

"No, my son. You have had cake enough this afternoon," replied Mrs. Stanley.

"Oh yes, do, mother, give me a piece of cake."

"It will make you sick, Charley."

"No, it won't. Please give me some."

"I had rather not."

"Yes, mother. Oh do! I want a piece of cake."

"Go 'way, Charles, and don't tease me."

There was a slight expression of impatience in the mother's voice. The child ceased his importunities for a few moments, but just as Mrs. Stanley had commenced a sentence, intended to embody some wise saying in regard to the management of children, the little boy broke in upon her with—

"I say, mother, give me a piece of cake, won't you?" in quite a loud voice.

Mrs. Stanley felt irritated by this importunity, but she governed herself. Satisfied that there would

be no peace unless the cake were forthcoming, she said, looking affectionately at the child:

"Poor little fellow! I suppose he does feel hungry. I don't think another piece of cake will hurt him. Excuse me a moment, Mrs. Noland."

The cake was obtained by Charley in the very way he had, hundreds of times before, accomplished his purpose, that is, by teasing it out of his mother. For the next ten minutes the friends conversed, unmolested. At the end of that time Charley again made his appearance.

"Go up into the nursery, and stay with Ellen," said Mrs. Stanley.

The child took no notice, whatever, of this direction, but walked steadily up to where his mother was sitting, saying, as he paused by her side—

"I want another piece of cake."

"Not any more, my son."

"Yes, mother. Give me some more."

"No." This was spoken in a very positive way.

Charley began to beg in a whining tone, which, not producing the desired effect, soon rose into a well-defined cry.

"I declare! I never saw such a hungry set as my children are. They will eat constantly from morning until night." Mrs. Stanley did not say this in the most amiable tone of voice.

"Mother! I want a piece of cake," cried Charley.

"I'll give you one little piece more; but, remember, that it will be the last; so don't ask me again."

Charley stopped crying at once. Mrs. Stanley went out with him. As soon as she was far enough from the parlour not to be heard, she took Charley

by the shoulders, and giving him a violent shake, said—

"You little rebel, you! If you come into the parlour again, I'll skin you!"

The cake was given. Charley cared about as much for the threat as he did for the shaking. He had gained his end.

"I pray daily for patience to bear with my children," said Mrs. Stanley, on returning to the parlour. "They try us severely."

"That they do," replied Mrs. Noland. "But it is in our power, by firmness, consistency, and kindness, to render our tasks comparatively light."

"Perhaps so. I try to be firm, and consistent, and kind with my children; to exercise toward them constant forbearance; but, after all, it is very hard to know exactly how to govern them."

"Mother, can't I go over into the square?" asked Emma, looking into the parlour just at this time. She was a little girl about eight years old.

"I would rather not have you go, my dear," returned Mrs. Stanley.

"Oh yes, mother, do let me go," urged Emma.

"Ellen can't go with you now; and I do not wish you to go alone."

"I can go well enough, mother."

"Well, run along then, you intolerable little tease, you!"

Emma scampered away, and Mrs. Stanley remarked—

"That is the way. They gain their ends by importunity."

"But should you allow that, my friend?"

"There was no particular reason why Emma should not go to the square. I didn't think, at first, when I said I would rather not have her go, or I would have said 'yes' at once. It is so difficult to decide upon children's requests on the spur of the moment."

"But after you had said that you did not want her to go to the square, would it not have been better to have made her abide by your wishes?"

"I don't think it would have been right for me to have deprived the child of the pleasure of playing in the square, from the mere pride of consistency. I was wrong in objecting at first—to have adhered to my objection would have been still a greater wrong; —don't you think so?"

"I do not," returned Mrs. Noland. "I know of no greater evil in a family, than for the children to discover that their parents vacillate in any matter regarding them. A denial once made to any request should be positive, even if, in a moment after, it be seen to have been made without sufficient reason."

"I cannot agree with you. Justice, I hold, to be paramount in all things. We should never wrong a child."

The third appearance of Charley again broke in upon the conversation.

"Give me another piece of cake, mother."

"What! Didn't I tell you that there was no more for you? No! you cannot have another morsel."

"I want some more cake," whined the child.

"Not a crumb more, sir."

The whine rose into a cry

"Go up stairs, sir."

Charley did not move.

"Go this instant."

"Give me some cake."

"No."

The cry swelled into a loud bawl.

Mrs. Stanley became excessively annoyed. "I never saw such persevering children in my life," said she, impatiently. "They don't regard what I say any more than if I had not spoken. Charles! Go out of the parlour this moment!"

The tone in which this was uttered the child understood. He left the parlour slowly, but continued to cry at the top of his voice. The parlour bell was rung, and Ellen the nurse appeared.

"Do, Ellen, give that boy another piece of cake! There is no other way to keep him quiet."

In about three minutes after this direction had been given, all was still again. Mrs. Stanley now changed the topic of conversation. Her manner was not quite so cheerful as before. The conduct of Charley had worried and mortified her.

The last piece of cake had not been really wanted. Charley asked for it because a spirit of opposition had been aroused, but he had no appetite to eat it. It was crumbled about the floor and wasted. His mother had peace for the next hour. After that she went into the kitchen to give directions, and make some preparations for tea. Charley was by her side.

"Ellen, take this child out," said she.

Ellen took hold of Charley's arm.

"No!—no!— Go 'way, Ellen!" he screamed.

"There!—there!—never mind. Let him stay," said the mother.

A jar of preserved fruit was brought forth.

"Give me some?" asked Charley.

"No, not now. You will get some at the table."

"I want some now. Give me some now."

A spoonful of the preserves was put into a saucer, and given to the child.

"Give me some more," said he, holding up his saucer in about half a minute.

"No. Wait until tea is ready."

"Give me some sweetmeats. I want more, mother!"

"I tell you, no."

A loud bawl followed.

"I declare this child will worry me to death!" exclaimed the mother, her mind all in confusion, lading out a large spoonful of the fruit, and putting it into his saucer.

When this was eaten, still more was demanded, and peremptorily refused. Crying was resorted to, but without effect, though it was loud and deafening. Finding this unsuccessful, the spoiled urchin determined to help himself. As soon as his mother's back was turned, he clambered up to the table and seized the jar containing the preserves. In pulling it over far enough to get his spoon into it, the balance of the jar was destroyed, and over it went, rolling off upon the floor, and breaking with a loud crash. At the moment this occurred, Mrs. Stanley entered the room. Her patience, that had been severely tried, was now completely overthrown. She was angry enough to punish her child, and feel a delight in do-

ing so. Seizing him by one arm, she lifted him from the floor, as if he had been but a feather, and hurried with him up to her chamber. There she whipped him unmercifully, and then put him to bed. He continued to cry after she had done so, when she commanded him to stop in a voice that he dared not disobey. An hour afterward, when much cooled down, she passed through the chamber. She looked down upon her little boy with a feeling of repentance for her anger and the severity of her punishment. This feeling was in no way mitigated on hearing the child sob in his sleep. The mother felt very unhappy.

So much for Mrs. Stanley—so much for her tenderness of feeling—so much for her warm-blooded system. Its effects need not be exposed further. Its folly need not be set in any plainer light.

Some weeks afterward she was spending an afternoon with Mrs. Noland. Her favourite topic was the management of children, and she introduced it as usual, inveighing as was her wont against the cruelty of punishing children—especially in cold blood, as she called it. For her part, she never punished except in extreme cases, and not then, unless provoked to do so. Unless she felt angry, and punished on the spur of the moment, she could not do it at all. During the conversation, which was led pretty much by Mrs. Stanley, a child, about the age of Charley, came into the parlour. He walked up to his mother and whispered some request in her ear.

"Oh no, Master Harry!" was the smiling, but decided reply.

The child lingered with a look of disappointment. At length he came up, and kissing his mother, asked

again, in a sweet, earnest way, for what he had been at first denied.

"After I said no!" And Mrs. Noland looked gravely into his face.

Tears came into Henry's eyes. But he said no more. In a moment or two he silently left the room.

"Mrs. Noland! How could you resist that dear little fellow? I declare it was right down cruel in you."

The eyes of Mrs. Stanley glistened as she spoke.

"It would have been far more cruel to him if I had yielded, after once having said 'no'—far more cruel had I given him what I knew would have injured him."

"But, I don't see how you could refuse so dear a child, when he asked you in such a sweet, affectionate manner. I should have given him any thing in the world he had asked for."

"That's not my way. I say 'no' only when I have good reason, and then I never change."

"Never?"

"Never."

Henry appeared at the parlour door again.

"Come in, dear," said Mrs. Noland.

The child came quickly forward, put up his mouth to kiss her, and then nestled closely by his mother's side. The conversation continued, without the slightest interruption from him.

"Dear little fellow," said Mrs. Stanley, once or twice, looking into the child's face, and smoothing his hair with her hand.

When the tea bell rung, the family assembled in

the dining-room. A visiter made it necessary that one of the children should wait. Henry was by the table as usual.

"Harry, dear," said his mother, "you will have to wait and come with Ellen."

The child felt very much disappointed. He looked up into his mother's face for a moment, and then, without a word, went out of the room.

"Poor little fellow! It is really a pity to make him wait; and he is so good," said Mrs. Stanley. "I am sure we can make room for him. Do call him back, and let him sit by me."

And she moved close to one of the older children as she spoke. "Here is plenty of room."

Mrs. Noland thought for a moment, and then told the waiter to call Henry back. The child came in as quietly as he had gone out, and came up to his mother's side.

"My dear," said Mrs. Noland, "this good lady here has made room for you by her side. You can go and sit by her."

The child's face brightened. He went quickly and took the offered seat. By the time tea was over, Henry had fallen asleep in his chair. Mrs. Noland, when all arose from the table, took Henry in her arms, and went with him, accompanied by Mrs. Stanley, to her chamber, where she undressed him, and kissing fondly his bright young cheek, laid him in his little bed.

Mrs. Stanley stood for some moments over the sleeping child, and looked down upon his calm face. As she did so, she remembered her own little Charley, and under what different circumstances and feelings

ne had been put to bed on the evening of Mrs. Noland's visit to her.

Whether the contrast did her any good, we have no means of knowing. We trust the lesson was not without its good effect upon her.

THE EVENING PRAYER.

"Our Father."

"Our Father." The mother's voice was low, and tender, and solemn.

"Our Father." On two sweet voices the words were borne upward. It was the innocence of reverent childhood that gave them utterance.

"Who art in the heavens."

"Who art in the heavens," repeated the children, one with her eyes bent meekly down, and the other looking upward, as if she would penetrate the heavens into which her heart aspired.

"Hallowed be Thy name."

Lower fell the voices of the little ones. In a gentle murmur they said: "Hallowed be Thy name."

"Thy kingdom come."

And the burden of the prayer was still taken up by the children—"Thy kingdom come"

"Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven."

Like a low, sweet echo from the land of angels—"Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven," filled the chamber.

And the mother continued—"Give us this day our daily bread."

"Our daily bread" lingered a moment on the air, as the mother's voice was hushed into silence.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors."

The eyes of the children had drooped for a moment. But they were uplifted again as they prayed—"And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors."

"And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

All these holy words were said, piously and fervently, by the little ones, as they knelt with clasped hands beside their mother. Then, as their thoughts, uplifted on the wings of prayer to their heavenly Father, came back again and rested on their earthly parents, a warmer love came gushing from their hearts.

Pure kisses—tender embraces—the fond "good night." What a sweet agitation pervaded all their feelings! Then two dear heads were placed side by side on the snowy pillow, the mother's last kiss given, and the shadowy curtains drawn.

What a pulseless stillness reigns throughout the chamber! Inwardly the parents' listening ears are bent. They have given these innocent ones into

the keeping of God's angels, and they can almost hear the rustle of their garments as they gather around their sleeping babes. A sigh, deep and tremulous, breaks on the air. Quickly the mother turns to the father of her children, with a look of earnest inquiry on her countenance. And he answers thus her silent question.

"Far back, through many years, have my thoughts been wandering. At my mother's knee thus said I nightly, in childhood, my evening prayer. It was that best and holiest of all prayers, "Our Father," that she taught me. Childhood and my mother passed away. I went forth as a man into the world, strong, confident, and self-seeking. Once I came into great temptation. Had I fallen in that temptation, I would have fallen, I sadly fear, never to have risen again. The struggle in my mind went on for hours. I was about yielding. All the barriers I could oppose to the in-rushing flood seemed just ready to give way, when, as I sat in my room one evening, there came from an adjoining chamber, now first occupied for many weeks, the murmur of low voices. I listened. At first, no articulate sound was heard, and yet something in the tones stirred my heart with new and strange emotions. At length, there came to my ears, in the earnest, loving voice of a woman, the words—'Deliver us from evil.' For an instant, it seemed to me as if the voice were that of my mother. Back, with a sudden bound through all the intervening years, went my thoughts; and, a child in heart again, I was kneeling at my mother's knee. Humbly and reverently I said over the words of the holy prayer she

had taught me, heart and eyes uplifted to heaven. The hour and the power of darkness had passed. I was no longer standing in slippery places, with a flood of waters ready to sweep me to destruction; but my feet were on a rock. My mother's pious care had saved her son. In the holy words she taught me in childhood, was a living power to resist evil through all my after life. Ah! that unknown mother, as she taught her child to repeat his evening prayer, how little dreamed she that the holy words were to reach a stranger's ears, and save him through memories of his own childhood and his own mother! And yet it was so. What a power there is in God's Word, as it flows into and rests in the minds of innocent children!"

Tears were in the eyes of the wife and mother as she lifted her face, and gazed with a subdued tenderness upon the countenance of her husband. Her heart was too full for utterance. A little while she thus gazed, and then, with a trembling joy, laid her head upon his bosom. Angels were in the chamber where their dear ones slept, and they felt their holy presence.

A PEEVISH DAY, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

"It is too bad, Rachael, to put me to all this trouble; and you know I can hardly hold up my head!"

Thus spoke Mrs. Smith, in a peevish voice, to a quiet-looking domestic, who had been called up from the kitchen to supply some unimportant omission in the breakfast-table arrangement.

Rachael looked hurt and rebuked, but made no reply.

"How could you speak in that way to Rachael?" said Mr. Smith, as soon as the domestic had withdrawn.

"If you felt just as I do, Mr. Smith, you would speak cross too!" Mrs. Smith replied a little warmly. "I feel just like a rag; and my head aches as if it would burst."

"I know you feel badly, and I am very sorry for you. But still, I suppose it is as easy to speak kindly as harshly. Rachael is very obliging and attentive, and should be borne with in occasional omissions, which you of course know are not wilful."

"It is easy enough to preach," retorted Mrs. Smith, whose temper, from bodily lassitude and pain, was in quite an irritable state. The reader will understand at least one of the reasons of this, when

he is told that the scene here presented occurred during the last oppressive week in August.

Mr. Smith said no more. He saw that to do so would only be to provoke instead of quieting his wife's ill-humour. The morning meal went by in silence, but little food passing the lips of either. How could it, when the thermometer was ninety-four at eight o'clock in the morning, and the leaves upon the trees were as motionless as if suspended in a vacuum? Bodies and minds were relaxed—and the one turned from food, as the other did from thought, with an instinctive aversion.

After Mr. Smith had left his home for his place of business, Mrs. Smith went up into her chamber, and threw herself upon the bed, her head still continuing to ache with great violence. It so happened that a week before, the chambermaid had gone away, sick, and all the duties of the household had in consequence devolved upon Rachael, herself not very well. Cheerfully, however, had she endeavoured to discharge these accumulated duties, and but for the unhappy, peevish state of mind in which Mrs. Smith indulged, would have discharged them without a murmuring thought. But, as she was a faithful, conscientious woman, and, withal, sensitive in her feelings, to be found fault with worried her exceedingly. Of this Mrs. Smith was well aware, and had, until the latter part of the trying month of August, acted toward Rachael with consideration and forbearance. But the last week of August was too much for her. The sickness of the chambermaid threw such heavy duties upon Rachael, whose daily headaches and nervous relaxation of body were borne

without a complaint, that their perfect performance was almost impossible. Slight omissions, which were next to unavoidable under the circumstances, became so annoying to Mrs. Smith, herself, as it has been seen, labouring under great bodily and mental prostration, that she could not bear them.

"She knows better, and she could do better, if she chose," was her rather uncharitable comment often inwardly made on the occurrence of some new trouble.

After Mr. Smith had taken his departure on the morning just referred to, Mrs. Smith went up into her chamber, as has been seen, and threw herself languidly upon a bed, pressing her hands to her throbbing temples, as she did so, and murmuring,

"I can't live at this rate!"

At the same time, Rachael set down in the kitchen the large waiter upon which she had arranged the dishes from the breakfast-table, and then sinking into a chair, pressed one hand upon her forehead, and sat for more than a minute in troubled silence. It had been three days since she had received from Mrs. Smith a pleasant word; and the last remark, made to her a short time before, had been the unkindest of all. At another time, even all this would not have moved her—she could have perceived that Mrs. S. was not in a right state—that lassitude of body had produced a temporary infirmity of mind. But, being herself affected by the oppressive season almost as much as her mistress, she could not make these allowances. While still seated, the chamber-bell was rung with a quick, startling jerk.

"What next?" peevishly ejaculated Rachael, and then slowly proceeded to obey the summons.

"How could you leave my chamber in such a condition as this?" was the salutation that met her ear, as she entered the presence of Mrs. Smith, who, half raised upon the bed, and leaning upon her hand, looked the very personification of languor, peevishness, and ill-humour. "You had plenty of time while we were eating breakfast to have put things a little to rights!"

To this Rachael made no reply, but turned away and went back into the kitchen. She had scarcely reached that spot, before the bell rang again, louder and quicker than before; but she did not answer it. In about three minutes it was jerked with an energy that snapped the wire, but Rachael was immovable. Five minutes elapsed, and then Mrs. Smith, fully aroused from the lethargy that had stolen over her, came down with a quick, firm step.

"What's the reason you didn't answer my bell? say!" she asked, in an excited voice.

Rachael did not reply.

"Do you hear me?"

Rachael had never been so treated before; she had lived with Mrs. Smith for three years, and had rarely been found fault with. She had been too strict in regard to the performance of her duty to leave much room for even a more exacting mistress to find fault; but now, to be overtasked and sick, and to be chidden, rebuked, and even angrily assailed, was more than she could well bear. She did not suffer herself to speak for some moments, and then her voice trembled, and the tears came out upon her cheeks.

"I wish you to get another in my place. I find

I don't suit you. My time will be up day after to-morrow."

"Very well," was Mrs. Smith's firm reply, as she turned away, and left the kitchen.

Here was trouble in good earnest. Often and often had Mrs. Smith said, during the past two or three years—"What should I do without Rachael?" And now she had given notice that she was going to leave her, and under circumstances which made pride forbid a request to stay. Determined to act out her part of the business with firmness and decision, she dressed herself and went out, hot and oppressive as it was, and took her way to an intelligence office, where she paid the required fee and directed a cook and chambermaid to be sent to her. On the next morning, about ten o'clock, an Irish girl came and offered herself as a cook, and was, after sundry questions and answers, engaged. So soon as this negotiation was settled, Rachael retired from the kitchen, leaving the new-comer in full possession. In half an hour after she received her wages, and left, in no very happy frame of mind, a home that had been for three years, until within a few days, a pleasant one. As for Mrs. Smith, she was ready to go to bed sick; but this was impracticable. Nancy, the new cook, had expressly stipulated that she was to have no duties unconnected with the kitchen. The consequence was, that notwithstanding the thermometer ranged above ninety, and the atmosphere remained as sultry as air from a heated oven, Mrs. Smith was compelled to arrange her chamber and parlours. By the time this was done, she was in a condition to go to bed, and lie until dinner-time.

The arrival of this important period brought new troubles and vexations. Dinner was late by forty minutes, and then came on the table in a most abominable condition. A fine sirloin was burnt to a crisp. The tomatoes were smoked, and the potatoes watery. As if this was not enough to mar the pleasure of the dinner hour for a hungry husband, Mrs. Smith added thereto a distressed countenance and discouraging complaints. Nancy was grumbled at and scolded every time she had occasion to appear in the room, and her single attempt to excuse herself on account of not understanding the cook-stove, was met by, "Do hush, will you! I'm out of all patience!"

As to the latter part of the sentence, that was a needless waste of words. The condition of mind she described was fully apparent.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, just as Mrs. Smith had found a temporary relief from a troubled mind, and a most intolerable headache, in sleep, a tap on the chamber-door awoke her, and there stood Nancy, all equipped for going out.

"I find I won't suit you, ma'am," said Nancy, "and so you must look out for another girl."

Having said this, she turned away and took her departure, leaving Mrs. Smith in a state of mind, as it is said, "more easily imagined than described."

"Oh dear! what shall I do?" at length broke from her lips, as she burst into tears, and burying her face in the pillow, sobbed aloud. Already she had repented of her fretfulness and fault-finding temper, as displayed toward Rachael, and could she have made a truce with pride, or silenced its whispers, would have sent for her well-tried domestic,

and endeavoured to make all fair with her again. But, under the circumstances, this was now impossible. While yet undetermined how to act, the street-bell rung, and she was compelled to attend the door, as she was now alone in the house. She found, on opening it, a rough-looking country girl, who asked if she were the lady who wanted a chambermaid. Any kind of help was better than none at all, and so Mrs. Smith asked the young woman to walk in. In treating with her in regard to her qualifications for the situation she applied for, she discovered that she knew "almost nothing at all about any thing." The stipulation that she was to be a doer-of-all-work-in-general, until a cook could be obtained, was readily agreed to, and then she was shown to her room in the attic, where she prepared herself for entering upon her duties.

"Will you please, ma'am, show me what you want me to do?" asked the new help, presenting herself before Mrs. Smith.

"Go into the kitchen, Ellen, and see that the fire is made. I'll be down there presently."

To be compelled to see after a new and ignorant servant, and direct her in every thing, just at so trying a season of the year, and while her mind was "all out of sorts," was a severe task for poor Mrs. Smith. She found that Ellen, as she had too good reason for believing, was totally unacquainted with kitchen-work. She did not even know how to kindle a coal fire; nor could she manage the stove after Mrs. Smith had made the fire for her. All this did not in any way tend to make her less unhappy or more patient than before On retiring for the night

she had a high fever, which continued unabated until morning, when her husband found her really ill; so much so as to make the attendance of a doctor necessary.

A change in the air had taken place during the night, and the temperature had fallen many degrees. This aided the efforts of the physician, and enabled him so to adapt his remedies as to speedily break the fever. But the ignorance and awkwardness of Ellen, apparent in her attempts to arrange her bed and chamber, so worried her mind, that she was near relapsing into her former feverish and excited state. The attendance of an elder maiden sister was just in time. All care was taken from her thoughts, and she had a chance of recovering a more healthy tone of mind and body. During the next week, she knew little or nothing of how matters were progressing out of her own chamber. A new cook had been hired, of whom she was pleased to hear good accounts, although she had not seen her; and Ellen, under the mild and judicious instruction of her sister, had learned to make up a bed neatly, to sweep, and dust in true style, and to perform all the little etceteras of chamber-work, greatly to her satisfaction. She was, likewise, good-tempered, willing, and to all appearance strictly trustworthy.

One morning, about a week after she had become too ill to keep up, she found herself so far recovered as to be able to go down stairs to breakfast. Every thing upon the table she found arranged in the neatest style. The food was well cooked, especially some tender rice cakes, of which she was very fond.

"Really, these are delicious!" said she, as the

finely flavoured cakes almost melted in her mouth. "And this coffee is just the thing! How fortunate we have been to obtain so good a cook! I was afraid we should never be able to replace Rachael. But even she is equalled, if not surpassed."

"Still she does not surpass Rachael," said Mr. Smith, a little gravely. "Rachael was a treasure."

"Indeed she was. And I have been sorry enough I ever let her go," returned Mrs. Smith.

At that moment the new cook entered with a plate of warm cakes.

"Rachael!" ejaculated Mrs. Smith, letting her knife and fork fall. "How do you do? I am glad to see you! Welcome home again!"

As she spoke quickly and earnestly, she held out her hand, and grasped that of her old domestic warmly. Rachael could not speak, but as she left the room she put her apron to her eyes. Hers were not the only one's dim with rising moisture.

For at least a year to come both Mrs. Smith and her excellent cook will have no cause to complain of each other. How they will get along during the last week of next August we cannot say, but hope the lesson they have both received will teach them to bear and fo bear.

SISTERS.

[We make the following extract from one of our books—"Advice to Young Men on their Duties and Conduct in Life."]

If you have younger sisters, who are just entering society, all your interest should be awakened for them. You cannot but have seen some little below the surface, and already made the discovery that too few of the young men who move about in the various social circles to which you have admission, are fit associates for a pure-minded woman. Their exterior, it is true, is very fair; they sing well, they dance well, their persons are elegant, and their manners attractive; but you have met them when they felt none of the restraints of female society, and seen them unmask their real characters. You can remember the ribald jest, the obscene allusion, the sneer at virtue, the unblushing acknowledgment of licentiousness. You have heard them speak of this sweet girl, and that pure-minded woman, in terms that would have roused your deepest indignation, had your own sister been the subject of allusion.

You may know all these things, but your innocent sisters at home cannot know them, nor see reason

for shunning the society of those whose real characters, if revealed, would cause them to turn away in disgust and horror. From the dangers of an acquaintanceship with such young men it is your duty to guard your sisters; and you must do this more by warding off the evil than by warnings against it. In order to this, you should make it a point of duty always to go with your sisters into company, and to be their companion, if possible, on all public occasions. By so doing, you can prevent the introduction of men whose principles are bad; or, if such introductions are forced upon them in spite of you, can throw in a timely word of caution. This latter it may be too late to do after an acquaintanceship is formed with a man whose character is detestable in your eyes, provided he have a fair exterior. Your sister will hardly be made to believe that one who is so attractive in all respects, and who can converse of virtue and honour so eloquently, can possibly have an impure or vicious mind. She will think you prejudiced. The great thing is to guard, by every means in your power, these innocent ones from the polluting presence of a bad man. You cannot tell how soon he may win the affections of the most innocent, confiding, and loving of them all, and draw her off from virtue. And even if his designs be honourable—if he win her but to wed her—her lot will be by no means an enviable one; he cannot make her happy; for happy no pure-minded woman ever has been, or ever can be made, by a corrupt, evil-minded, and selfish man.

You are a brother; your position is one of great responsibility; let this be ever before your mind.

On your faithfulness to your duty, may depend a lifetime of happiness or misery for those who are, or ought to be, very dear to you. But not only should you seek to guard them from the danger just alluded to—your affection for them should lead you to enter into their pleasures as far as in your power to do so; to give interest and variety to the home circle; to afford them, at all times, the assistance of your judgment in matters of trivial as well as grave importance. By this you will gain their confidence and acquire an influence over them that may, at some later period, enable you to serve them in a moment of impending danger.

We very often—indeed, far too often—see young men with sisters who appear to be entirely indifferent in regard to them. They rarely visit together; their associates, male and female, are strangers to each other; they appear to have no common interests. This state of things is the fault, nine times in ten, of the young men. It is the result of their neglect and indifference. There are very few sisters who do not love with a most tender and unselfish regard their brothers, especially their elder brothers, and who would not feel happier in being their companions than in the companionship of almost any one. Notwithstanding all this neglect and indifference, how willingly is every little office performed that adds to the brother's comfort! How much care is there for him who gives back so little in return! The sister's love is as unselfish as it is unostentatious. It is shown in acts, not in professions. How can any young man be indifferent to such love? How can he fail in its full and free reciprocation?

A regard for himself, as well as for his sisters, should lead a young man to be much with them. Their influence in softening, polishing, and refining his character, will be very great. They have perceptions of the propriety and fitness of things far quicker than he has; and this he will soon see if he observe their remarks upon the persons with whom they come in contact, and the circumstances that transpire around them. While he is reasoning on the subject, and balancing many things in his mind before coming to a satisfactory conclusion, they, by a kind of intuition, have settled the whole matter, and settled it, he will find, truly. In the graver things of life, a man's judgment is more to be relied upon than a woman's, because here a regular course of reasoning from premises laid down is required, and this a man is much more able to do than a woman; but in matters of taste and propriety, and in the quick appreciation of character, a woman's perceptions are worth far more than a man's judgment. And in the more weighty and serious matters of life, a man will always find that he will receive aid, in coming to a nice decision, from a wife or sister who loves him, if he will only carefully lay the whole subject before her, with the reasons that appeal to his judgment, and be guided in some measure by her perceptions of what is right. This is because man is in the province of the understanding, which acts by thought, and woman in the province of the affections, which act by perceptions; not that a man does not have perceptions and a woman reason, but the leading characteristic difference between the sexes is as stated, and each comes to conclusions

mainly by either the one or the other of these two modes. This position, which we believe to be the true one in regard to the difference between the sexes, demonstrates the great use of female society, especially the society of those who feel some interest in and affection for us. In such society, there is a reciprocation of benefits that is nearly, if not quite, equal. And nowhere can this reciprocation be of greater utility than among brothers and sisters, just entering upon life, with all their knowledge of human character and human life to gain.

BROTHERS.

[The following suggestions, on the relation and duties of a sister to her brother, are taken from a volume by the Author of this book, entitled, "Advice to Young Ladies on their Duties and Conduct in Life."]

OLDER brothers are not usually as attentive to their younger sisters as the latter would feel to be agreeable. The little girls that were so long known as children, with the foibles, faults, and caprices of children, although now grown up into tall young ladies, who have left or are about leaving school, are still felt to be children, or but a little advanced beyond childhood, by the young men who have had some three or four years experience in the world. With these older

brothers, there will not usually be, arising from this cause, much confidential and unreserved intercourse; at least, not until the sisters have added two or three years more to their ages, and assumed more of the quiet dignity of womanhood.

Upon these older brothers, therefore, the conduct of sisters cannot, usually, have much effect. They are removed to a point chiefly beyond the circle of their influence. But upon brothers near about their own age, and younger than themselves, the influence of sisters may be brought to bear with the most salutary results.

The temptations to which young men are exposed, when first they come in contact with the world, are many, and full of the strongest allurements. Their virtuous principles are assailed in a thousand ways; sometimes boldly, and sometimes by the most insidious arts of the vicious and evil-minded. All, therefore, that can make virtue lovely in their eyes, and vice hideous, they need to strengthen the good principles stored up, from childhood, in their minds. For their sakes, home should be made as attractive as possible, in order to induce them frequently to spend their evenings in the place where, of all others, they will be safest. To do this, a young lady must consult the tastes of her brothers, and endeavour to take sufficient interest in the pursuits that interest them, as to make herself companionable. If they are fond of music, one of the strongest incentives she can have for attaining the highest possible skill in performing upon the piano, will be the hope of making home, thereby, the most attractive place where they can spend their evenings. If they are fond of

reading, let her read, as far as she can, the books that interest them, in order that she may take part in their conversations; and let her, in every other possible way, furnish herself with the means of making home agreeable.

There is no surer way for a sister to gain an influence with her brother, than to cultivate all exterior graces and accomplishments, and improve her mind by reading, thinking, and observation. By these means she not only becomes his intelligent companion, but inspires him with a feeling of generous pride toward her, that, more than any thing else, impresses her image upon his mind, brings her at all times nearer to him, and gives her a double power over him for good.

The indifference felt by brothers toward their sisters, when it does exist, often arises from the fact that their sisters are inferior, in almost every thing, to the women they are in the habit of meeting abroad. Where this is the case, such indifference is not so much to be wondered at.

Sisters should always endeavour to gain, as much as possible, the confidence of their brothers, and to give them their confidence in return. Mutual good offices will result from this, and attachments that could only produce unhappiness may be prevented. A man sees more of men than woman does, and the same is true in regard to the other sex. This being so, a brother has it in his power at once to guard his sister against the advances of an unprincipled man, or a man whose habits he knows to be bad; and a sister has it in her power to reveal to her brother traits of character in a woman, for whom he is about

forming an attachment, that would repel rather than attract him.

Toward her younger brother a sister should be particularly considerate. In allusion to this subject, Mrs. Farrar has written so well that we cannot repress our wish to quote her. "If your brothers are younger than you, encourage them to be perfectly confidential with you; win their friendship by your sympathy in all their concerns, and let them see that their interests and their pleasures are liberally provided for in the family arrangements. Never disclose their little secrets, however unimportant they may seem to you; never pain them by an ill-timed joke; never repress their feelings by ridicule; but be their tenderest friend, and then you may become their ablest adviser. If separated from them by the course of school and college education, make a point of keeping up your intimacy by full, free, and affectionate correspondence; and when they return to the paternal roof, at that awkward age between youth and manhood, when reserve creeps over the mind like an impenetrable vail, suffer it not to interpose between you and your brothers. Cultivate their friendship and intimacy with all the address and tenderness you possess; for it is of unspeakable importance to them that their sisters should be their confidential friends. Consider the loss of a ball or party, for the sake of making the evening pass pleasantly to your brothers at home, as a small sacrifice —one you should unhesitatingly make. If they go into company with you, see that they are introduced to the most desirable acquaintances, and show them

that you are interested in their acquitting themselves well."

Having quoted thus much from the "Young Lady's Friend," we feel inclined to give a few passages more from the author's admirable remarks on the relation of brother and sister.

"So many temptations beset young men, of which young women know nothing, that it is of the utmost importance that your brothers' evenings should be happily passed at home; that their friends should be your friends; that their engagements should be the same as yours; and that various innocent amusements should be provided for them in the family circle. Music is an accomplishment usually valuable as a home enjoyment, as rallying round the piano the various members of a family, and harmonizing their hearts, as well as their voices, particularly in devotional strains. I know no more agreeable and interesting spectacle than that of brothers and sisters playing and singing together those elevated compositions in music and poetry which gratify the taste and purify the heart, while their parents sit delighted by. I have seen and heard an elder sister thus leading the family choir, who was the soul of harmony to the whole household, and whose life was a perfect example of those virtues which I am here endeavouring to inculcate. Let no one say, in reading this chapter, that too much is here required of sisters; that no one can be expected to lead such a self-sacrificing life; for the sainted one to whom I refer was all that I would ask my sister to be; and a happier person never lived. 'To do good and make others happy,'

was the rule of her life; and in this she found the art of making herself so.

"Brothers will generally be found strongly opposed to the slightest indecorum in sisters. . . . . Their intercourse with all sorts of men enables them to judge of the construction put upon certain actions, and modes of dress and speech, much better than women can; and you will do well to take their advice on all such points.

"I have been told by men, who had passed unharmed through the temptations of youth, that they owed their escape from many dangers to the intimate companionship of affectionate and pure-minded sisters. They have been saved from a hazardous meeting with idle company by some home engagement, of which their sisters were the charm; they have refrained from mixing with the impure, because they would not bring home thoughts and feelings which they could not share with those trusting and loving friends; they have put aside the wine-cup, and abstained from stronger potations, because they would not profane with their fumes the holy kiss, with which they were accustomed to bid their sisters good-night."

HOME.

Society is marked by greater and smaller divisions, as into nations, communities, and families. A man is a member of the commonwealth, a smaller community, as a hamlet or city, and his family at the same time; and the more perfectly all his duties to his family are discharged, the more fully does he discharge his duties to the community and the nation; for a good member of a family cannot be a bad member of the commonwealth, for he that is faithful in what is least, will also be faithful in what is greater. Indeed, the more perfectly a man fulfils all his domestic duties, the more perfectly, in that very act, has he discharged his duty to the whole; for the whole is made up of parts, and its health depends entirely upon the health of the various parts. There are, of course, general as well as specific duties; but the more conscientious a man is in the discharge of specific duties, the more ready will he be to perform those that are general; and we believe that the converse of this will be found equally true, and that those who have least regard for home—who have, indeed, no home, no domestic circle—are the worst citizens. This they may not be apparently; they may not break the laws, nor do any thing to call down upon them censure from the community, and yet, in the secret and almost unconscious dissemination of demoralizing principles, may be doing

a work far more destructive of the public good than if they had committed a robbery.

We always feel pain when we hear a young man speak lightly of home, and talk carelessly, or, it may be, with sportive ridicule, of the "old man" and the "old woman," as if they were of but little consequence. We mark it as a bad indication, and feel that the feet of that young man are treading upon dangerous ground. His home education may not have been of the best kind, nor may home influences have reached his higher and better feelings; but he is at least old enough now to understand the causes, and to seek rather to bring into his home all that it needs to render it more attractive, than to estrange himself from it and expose its defects.

Instances of this kind are not of very frequent occurrence. Home has its charms for nearly all, and the very name comes with a blessing to the spirit. This, however, is more the case with those who have been separated from it, than it is with those who yet remain in the old homestead with parents, brothers, and sisters, as their friends and companions.

The earnest love of home, felt by nearly all who have been compelled to leave that pleasant place, is a feeling that should be tenderly cherished: and this love should be kept alive by associations that have in them as perfect a resemblance of home as it is possible to obtain. It is for this reason that it is bad for a young man to board in a large hotel, where there is nothing in which there is even an image of the home-circle. Each has his separate chamber; but that is not home. All meet together

at the common table; but there is no home feeling there, with its many sweet reciprocations. The meal completed, all separate, each to his individual pursuit or pleasure. There is a parlour, it is true; but there are no family gatherings there. One and another sit there, as inclination prompts; but each sits alone, busy with his own thoughts. All this is a poor substitute for home. And yet it offers its attractions to some. A young man in a hotel has more freedom than in a family or private boarding-house. He comes in and goes out unobserved; there is no one to say to him, "why?" or "wherefore?" But this is a dangerous freedom, and one which no young man should desire.

But mere negative evils, so to speak, are not the worst that beset a young man who unwisely chooses a public hotel as a place for boarding. He is much more exposed to temptations there than in a private boarding-house, or at home. Men of licentious habits, in most cases, select hotels as boarding-places; and such rarely scruple to offer to the ardent minds of young men, with whom they happen to fall in company, those allurements that are most likely to lead them away from virtue. And, besides this, there being no evening home-circle in a hotel, a young man who is not engaged earnestly in some pursuit that occupies his hours of leisure from business has nothing to keep him there, but is forced to seek for something to interest his mind elsewhere, and is, in consequence, more open to temptation.

Home is man's true place. Every man should have a home. Here his first duties lie, and here he

finds the strength by which he is able successfully to combat in life's temptations. Happy is that young man who is still blessed with a home—who has his mother's counsel and the pure love of sisters to strengthen and cheer him amid life's opening combats.

A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE ON THE PATH OF A MONEY-LENDER.

Mr. Edgar was a money-lender, and scrupled not in exacting the highest "street rates" of interest that could be obtained. If good paper were offered, and he could buy it from the needy seeker of cash at two or even three per cent. a month, he did not hesitate about the transaction on any scruples of justice between man and man. Below one per cent. a month, he rarely made loans. He had nothing to do with the question, as to whether the holder of bills could afford the sacrifice. The circle of his thoughts went not beyond gain to himself.

Few days closed with Mr. Edgar that he was not able to count up gains as high as from thirty to one hundred dollars: not acquired in trade—not coming back to him as the reward of productive industry —but the simple accumulation of large clippings from the anticipated reward of others' industry. Always with a good balance in bank, he had but to

sign his name to a check, and the slight effort was repaid by a gain of from ten to fifty dollars, according to the size and time of the note he had agreed to discount. A shrewd man, and well acquainted with the business standing of all around him, Mr. Edgar rarely made mistakes in money transactions. There was always plenty of good paper offering, and he never touched any thing regarded as doubtful.

Was Mr. Edgar a happy man? Ah! that is a home question. But we answer frankly, no. During his office hours, while his love of gain was active —while good customers were coming and going, and good operations being effected—his mind was in a pleasurable glow. But, at other times, he suffered greatly from a pressure on his feelings, the cause of which he did not clearly understand. Wealth he had always regarded as the greatest good in life. And now he not only had wealth, but the income therefrom was a great deal more than he had any desire to spend. And yet he was not happy—no, not even in the thought of his large possessions. Only in the mental activity through which more was obtained, did he really find satisfaction; but this state was only of short duration.

Positive unhappiness, Mr. Edgar often experienced. Occasional losses, careful and shrewd as he always was, were inevitable. These fretted him greatly. To lose a thousand dollars, instead of gaining, as was pleasantly believed, some sixty or seventy, was a shower of cold water upon his ardent love of accumulation: and he shivered painfully under the infliction. The importunities of friends who needed

money, and to whom it was unsafe to lend it, were also a source of no small annoyance. And, moreover, there was little of the heart's warm sunshine at home. As Mr. Edgar had thought more of laying up wealth for his children than giving them the true riches of intellect and heart, ill weeds had sprung up in their minds. He had not loved them with an unselfish love, and he received not a higher affection than he had bestowed. Their prominent thought, in regard to him, seemed ever to be the obtaining of some concession to their real or imaginary wants; and, if denied these, they reacted upon him in anger, sullenness, or complaint.

Oh, no! Mr. Edgar was not happy. Few gleams of sunshine lay across his path. Life to him, in his own bitter words, uttered after some keen disappointment, had "proved a failure." And yet he continued eager for gain; would cut as deep, exact as much from those who had need of his money in their business, as ever. The measure of per centage was the measure of his satisfaction.

One day a gentleman said to him—

"Mr. Edgar, I advised a young mechanic who has been in business for a short time, and who has to take notes for his work, to call on you for the purpose of getting them cashed. He has no credit in bank, and is, therefore, compelled to go upon the street for money. Most of his work is taken by one of the safest houses in the city; his paper is, therefore, as good as any in market. Deal as moderately with him as you can. He knows little about these matters, or where to go for the accommodation he needs."

"Is he an industrious and prudent young man?" inquired Mr. Edgar, caution and cupidity at once excited.

"He is."

"What's his name?"

"Blakewell."

"Oh, I know him. Very well; send him along, and if his paper is good, I'll discount it."

"You'll find it first-rate," said the gentleman.

"How much shall I charge him?" This was Mr. Edgar's first thought, so soon as he was alone. Even as he asked himself the question, the young mechanic entered.

"You take good paper, sometimes?" said the latter, in a hesitating manner.

The countenance of Mr. Edgar became, instantly, very grave.

"Sometimes I do," he answered, with assumed indifference.

"I have a note of Leyden & Co.'s that I wish discounted," said Blakewell.

"For how much?"

"Three hundred dollars—six months;" and he handed Mr. Edgar the note.

"I don't like over four months' notes," remarked the money-lender, coldly. Then he asked, "What rate of interest do you expect to pay?"

"Whatever is usual. Of course, I wish to get it done as low as possible. My profits are not large, and every dollar I pay in discounts is so much taken from the growth of my business and the comfort of my family."

'You have a family?"

"Yes, sir. A wife and four children."

Mr. Edgar mused for a moment or two. An unselfish thought was struggling to get into his mind.

"What have you usually paid on this paper?" he asked.

"The last I had discounted cost me one and a half per cent. a month."

"Notes of this kind are rarely marketable below that rate," said Mr. Edgar. He had thought of exacting two per cent. "If you will leave the note, and call round in half an hour, I will see what can be done."

"Very well," returned the mechanic. "Be as moderate with me as you can."

For the half hour that went by during the young man's absence, Mr. Edgar walked the floor of his counting-room, trying to come to some decision in regard to the note. Love of gain demanded two per cent. a month, while a feeble voice, scarcely heard so far away did it seem, pleaded for a generous regard to the young man's necessities. The conflict taking place in his mind was a new one for the money-lender. In no instance before had he experienced any hesitation on the score of a large discount. Love of gain continued clamorous for two per cent. on the note; yet, ever and anon, the low voice stole, in pleading accents, to his ears.

"I'll do it for one and a half," said Mr. Edgar, yielding slightly to the claim of humanity, urged by the voice, that seemed to be coming nearer.

Love of gain, after slight opposition, was satisfied.

But the low, penetrating voice asked for something better still.

"Weakness! Folly!" exclaimed Mr. Edgar. "I'd better make him a present of the money at once."

It availed nothing. The voice could not be hushed.

"One per cent! He couldn't get it done as low as that in the city."

"He is a poor young man, and has a wife and four little children," said the voice. "Even the abstraction of legal interest from his hard earnings is defect enough; to lose twice that sum, will make a heavy draught on his profits, which, under the present competition in trade, are not large. He is honest and industrious, and by his useful labour is aiding the social well-being. Is it right for you to get his reward?—to take his profits, and add them to your already rich accumulations?"

Mr. Edgar did not like these home questions, and tried to stop his ears, so that the voice could not find an entrance. But he tried in vain.

"Bank rates on this note," continued the inward voice, "would not much exceed nine dollars. Even this is a large sum for a poor man to lose. Double the rate of interest, and the loss becomes an injury to his business, or the cause of seriously abridging his home comforts. And how much will nine dollars contribute to your happiness? Not so much as a jot or a tittle. You are unable, now, to spend your income."

The young mechanic entered at this favourable moment. The money lender pointed to a chair;

then turned to his desk, and filled up, hurriedly, a check. Blakewell glanced at the amount thereof as it was handed to him, and an instant flush of surprise came into his face.

"Haven't you made a mistake, Mr. Edgar?" said he.

"In what respect?"

"The note was for three hundred dollars, six months, and you have given me a check for two hundred and ninety dollars, forty-three cents."

"I've charged you bank interest," said Mr. Edgar, with a feeling of pleasure at his heart so new, that it sent a glow along every nerve and fibre of his being.

"Bank interest! I did not expect this, sir," replied the young man, visibly moved. "For less than one and a half per cent. a month, I have not been able to obtain money. One per cent. I wou' have paid you cheerfully. Eighteen dollars saved. How much good that sum will do me! I could not have saved it—or, I might say, have received it—more opportunely. This is a kindness for which I shall ever remember you gratefully."

Grasping the money-lender's hand, he shook it warmly; then turned and hurried away.

Only one previous transaction had that day been made by Mr. Edgar. In that transaction, his gain was fifty dollars, and much pleasure had it given him. But the delight experienced was not to be compared with what he now felt. It was to him a new experience in life—a realization of that beautiful truth, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Once or twice during the day, as Mr. Edgar dwe

on the little circumstance, his natural love of gain caused regret for the loss of money involved in the transaction to enter his mind. How cold, moody, and uncomfortable he instantly became! Self-love was seeking to rob the money-lender of the just reward of a good deed. But the voice which had prompted the generous act was heard, clear and sweet, and again his heart beat to a gladder measure.

Evening was closing in on the day following. It was late in December, and winter had commenced in real earnest. Snow had fallen for some hours. Now, however, the sky was clear, but the air keen and frosty. The day, to Mr. Edgar, was one in which more than the usual number of "good transactions" had been made. On one perfectly safe note he had been able to charge as high as three per cent. per month. Full of pleasurable excitement had his mind been while thus gathering in gain, but now, the excitement being over, he was oppressed. From whence the pressure came, he did not know. A cloud usually fell upon his spirits with the closing day; and there was not sunshine enough at home to chase it from his sky.

As Mr. Edgar walked along, with his eyes upon the pavement, his name was called. Looking up, he saw, standing at the open door of a small house, the mechanic he had befriended on the day before.

"Step in here just one moment," said the young man. The request was made in a way that left Mr. Edgar no alternative but compliance. So he entered the humble dwelling. He found himself in a small,

unlighted room, adjoining one in which a lamp was burning, and in which was a young woman, plainly but neatly dressed, and four children, the youngest lying in a cradle. The woman held in her hand a warm Bay State shawl, which, after examining a few moments, with a pleased expression of countenance, she threw over her shoulders, and glanced at herself in a looking-glass. The oldest of the children, a boy, was trying on a new overcoat; and his sister, two years younger, had a white muff and a warm woollen shawl, in which her attention was completely absorbed. A smaller child had a new cap, and he was the most pleased of any.

"Oh, isn't father good to buy us all these? and we wanted them so much," said the oldest of the children. "Yesterday morning, when I told him how cold I was going to school, he said he was sorry, but that I must try and do without a coat this winter, for he hadn't money enough to get us all we wanted. How did he get more money, mother?"

"To a kind gentleman, who helped your father, we are indebted for these needed comforts," replied the mother.

"He must be a good man," said the boy. "What's his name?"

"His name is Mr. Edgar."

"I will ask God to bless him to-night when I say my prayers," innocently spoke out the youngest of the three children.

"What does all this mean?" asked the money-lender, as he hastily retired from the room he had entered.

"If you had charged me one per cent. on my note, this scene would never have occurred," answered the mechanic. "With the sum you generously saved me, I was able to buy these comforts. My heart blesses you for the deed; and if the good wishes of my happy family can throw sunshine across your path, it will be full of brightness."

Too much affected to reply, Mr. Edgar returned the warm pressure of the hand which had grasped his, and glided away.

A gleam of sunshine had indeed fallen along the pathway of the money-lender. Home had a brighter look as he passed his own threshold. He felt kinder and more cheerful; and kindness and cheerfulness flowed back to him from all the inmates of his dwelling. He half wondered at the changed aspect worn by every thing. His dreams that night were not of losses, fires, and the wreck of dearly-cherished hopes, but of the humble home made glad by his generous kindness. Again the happy mother, the pleased children, and the grateful father, were before him, and his own heart leaped with a new delight.

"It was a small act—a very light sacrifice on my part," said Mr. Edgar to himself, as he walked, in a musing mood, toward his office on the next morning. "And yet of how much real happiness has it been the occasion! So much that a portion thereof has flowed back upon my own heart."

"A good act is twice blessed." It seemed as if the words were spoken aloud, so distinctly and so suddenly were they presented to the mind of Mr. Edgar.

Ah, if he will only heed that suggestion, made by some pure spirit, brought near to him by the stirring of good affections in his mind! In it lies the secret of true happiness. Let him but act therefrom, and the sunshine will never be absent from his pathway.

ENGAGED AT SIXTEEN.

"MRS. LEE is quite fortunate with her daughters," remarked a visitor to Mrs. Wyman, whose oldest child, a well grown girl of fifteen, was sitting by.

"Yes; Kate and Harriet went off in good time. She has only Fanny left."

"Who is to be married this winter."

"Fanny?"

"She is engaged to Henry Florence."

"Indeed! And she is only just turned of sixteen. How fortunate, truly! Some people have their daughters on their hands until they are two or three-and-twenty, when the chances for good matches are very low. *I* was only sixteen when *I* was married."

"You?"

"Certainly; and then I had rejected two or three young men. There is nothing like early marriages, depend upon it, Mrs. Clayton. They always turn out the best. The most desirable young men take

their pick of the youngest girls, and leave the older ones for second-rate claimants."

"Do you hear that, Anna?" Mrs. Clayton said, laughing, as she turned to Mrs. Wyman's daughter. "I hope you will not remain a moment later than your mother did upon the maiden list."

Anna blushed slightly, but did not reply. What had been said, however, made its impression on her mind. She felt that to be engaged early was a matter greatly to be desired.

"My mother was married at sixteen, and here am I fifteen, and without a lover." So thought Anna, as she paused over the page of a new novel, some hours after she had listened to the conversation that passed between her mother and Mrs. Clayton, and mused of love and matrimony.

From that time, Anna Wyman was another girl. The sweet simplicity of manner, the unconscious innocence peculiar to her age, gradually vanished. Her eye, that was so clear and soft with the light of girlhood's pleasant fancies, grew earnest and restless, and, at times, intensely bright. The whole expression of her countenance was new. It was no longer a placid sky, with scarce a cloud floating in its quiet depths, but changeful as April, with its tears and smiles blending in strange beauty. Her heart, that had long beat tranquilly, would now bound at a thought, and send the bright crimson to her cheek—would flutter at the sight of the very individual whom she, a short time before, could meet without a single wave ruffling the surface of her feelings. The woman had suddenly displaced the girl; a sisterly regard, that pure affection which an inno-

cent maiden's heart has for all around her had expired on the altar where was kindling up the deep passion called *love*. And yet Anna Wyman had not reached her sixteenth year.

All at once, she became restless, capricious, unhappy. She had been at school up to this period, but now insisted that she was too old for that; her mother seconded this view of the matter, and her father, a man of pretty good sense, had to yield.

"We must give Anna a party now," said Mrs. Wyman, after their daughter had left school.

"Why so?" asked the father.

"Oh—because it is time that she was beginning to come out."

"Come out, how?"

"You are stupid, man. Come out in the list of young ladies. Go into company."

"But she is a mere child, yet—not sixteen."

"Not sixteen! And how old was *I*, pray, when you married me?"

The husband did not reply.

"How old was I, Mr. Wyman?"

"About sixteen, I believe."

"Well; and was I a mere child?"

"You were rather young to marry, at least," Mr. Wyman ventured to say. This remark was made rather too feelingly.

"Too young to marry!" ejaculated the wife, in a tone of surprise and indignation—"too young to marry; and my husband to say so, too! Mr. Wyman, do you mean to intimate—do you mean to say?—Mr. Wyman, what do you mean by that remark?"

"Oh, nothing at all," soothingly replied the husband; "only that I"——

"What?"

"That I don't, as a general thing, approve of very early marriages. The character of a young lady is not formed before twenty-one or two; nor has she gained that experience and knowledge of the world that will enable her to choose with wisdom."

"You don't pretend to say that my character was not formed at sixteen?" This was accompanied by a threatening look.

Whatever his thoughts were, Mr. Wyman took good care not to express them. He merely said—

"I believe, Margaret, that I haven't volunteered any allusion to you."

"Yes, but you don't approve of early marriages."

"True."

"Well, didn't I marry at sixteen? And isn't your opinion a reflection upon your wife?"

"Circumstances alter cases," smilingly returned Mr. Wyman. "Few women at sixteen were like you. Very certainly your daughter is not."

"There I differ with you, Mr. Wyman. I believe our Anna would make as good a wife now as I did at sixteen. She is as much of a woman in appearance; her mind is more matured, and her education advanced far beyond what mine was. She deserves a good husband, and must have one before the lapse of another year."

"How can you talk so, Margaret? For my part, I do not wish to see her married for at least five years."

"Preposterous! I wouldn't give a cent for a

marriage that takes place after seventeen or eighteen. They are always indifferent affairs, and rarely ever turn out well. The earlier the better, depend upon it. First love and first lover, is my motto."

"Well, Margaret, I suppose you will have these matters your own way; but I don't agree with you for all."

"Anna must have a party."

"You can do as you like."

"But you must assent to it."

"How can I do that, if I don't approve?"

"But you must approve."

And Mrs. Wyman persevered until she made him approve—at least do so apparently. And so a party was given to Anna, at which she was introduced to several dashing young men, whose attentions almost turned her young head. In two weeks she had a confidante, a young lady named Clara Spenser, not much older than herself. The progress already made by Anna in love matters will appear in the following conversation held in secret with Clara.

"Did you say Mr. Carpenter had been to see you since the party?" asked Clara.

"Yes, indeed," was the animated reply.

"He's a love of a man!—the very one of all others that I would set my cap for, if there was any hope. But you will, no doubt, carry him off."

Anna coloured to the temples, half with confusion and half with delight.

"He used to pay attention to Jane Sherman, I'm told."

"Yes; but you've cut her out entirely. Didn't

you notice how unhappy she seemed at the par whenever he was with you?"

"No; was she?"

"Oh, yes; everybody noticed it. But you can carry off all of her beaux; she's a mere drab of a girl. And, besides, she's getting on the old maids' list; I'm told she's more than twenty."

"She is?"

"It's true."

"Oh, dear;" there's no fear of her then. If I were to go over sixteen before I married, I should be frightened to death."

"Suppose Carpenter offers himself?"

"I hope he won't just yet."

"Why?"

"I want two or three strings to my bow. It would be dangerous to reject one unless I had another in my eye."

"Reject? Nonsense! Why should you reject an offer?"

"My mother had three offers before she was sixteen, and rejected two of them."

"Was she married so early?"

"Oh, yes; she was a wife at sixteen, and I'm not going to be a day later, if possible. I'd like to decline *three* offers and get married into the bargain before a year passes. Wouldn't that be admirable? It would be something to boast of all my life."

Pretty well advanced!—the reader no doubt exclaims; and so our young lady certainly was. When a very young girl gets into love matters, she "does them up," as the saying is, quite fast; she doesn't mince matters at all. A maiden of twenty is cooler,

more thoughtful, and more cautious. She thinks a good deal, and is very careful how she lets any one —even her confidante, if she should happen to have one, (which is doubtful)—know much beyond her mere external thoughts. Four or five years make a good deal of difference in these things. But this need hardly have been said.

"You are going to Mrs. Ashton's on Wednesday evening, of course?" said Clara Spenser to Anna, on visiting her one morning, some weeks after the introduction to Carpenter had taken place.

"Oh, certainly; their soirées, I'm told, are elegant affairs."

"Indeed they are; I've been to two of them. Fine music, pleasant company, and so much freedom of intercourse—oh, they are delightful!"

"Did you ever see Mr. Carpenter there?"

"Oh, yes; he always attends."

"I shall enjoy myself highly."

"That you will—the young men are so attentive."

Wednesday night soon came round, and Anna was permitted to go, unattended by either of her parents, to the so-called soirée at Mrs. Ashton's. As she had hoped and believed, Carpenter was there. His attentions to her were constant and flattering; he poured many compliments into her ears, talking to her all the time in a low, musical tone. Anna's heart fluttered in her bosom with pleasure; she felt that she had made a conquest. But the fact of bringing so charming a young man to her feet, and that so speedily, quickened her pride, and made it seem the easiest thing in the world to be able to reject three

lovers and yet be engaged, or even married, at sixteen.

Besides Carpenter, there was another present who saw attractions about Anna Wyman. He wore a moustache, and made quite a dashing appearance. In the language of many young ladies, who admired him, he was an elegant-looking young man—just the one to be proud of as a beau. His name was Elliott.

As soon as he could get access to the ear of the young and inexperienced girl, he charmed it with a deeper charm than Carpenter had been able to in part. She felt almost like one within a magic circle. His eye fascinated her, and his voice murmured in her ear like low, sweet music.

A short time before parting from her, he said—"Miss Wyman, may I have the pleasure of calling upon you at your father's house?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I shall be most happy to see you." She spoke with feeling.

"Then I shall visit you frequently. In your society I promise myself much happiness."

Anna's eyes fell to the floor, and the colour deepened on her cheeks. When she looked up, Elliott was gazing steadily in her face, with an expression of admiration and love.

Her heart was lost. Carpenter, that love of a man, was not thought of—or, only as one of her rejected lovers.

When Anna laid her head upon her pillow that night, it was not to sleep. Her mind was too full of pleasant images, central to all of which was the elegant, accomplished, handsome Mr. Elliott. He had, she conceived, as good as offered himself, and she

much as she wished to reject three lovers before she accepted one, felt strongly inclined to accept him, and so end the matter.

Now, who was Mr. Thomas Elliott? A few words will portray him. Mr. Elliott was twenty-six; he kept a store in the city; had been in business for some years, but was not very successful. His habits of life were not good; his principles had no sound, moral basis. He was, in fact, just the man to make a silly child like Anna Wyman wretched for life. But why did he seek for one like her? That is easily explained. Mr. Wyman was reputed to be pretty well off in the world, and Mr. Elliott's affairs were in rather a precarious condition; but he managed to keep so good a face upon the matter, that none suspected his real condition.

After visiting Anna for a short time, he offered his hand. If it had not been that her sixteenth birthday was so near, Anna would have declined the offer, for Thomas Elliott did not grow dearer to her every day. There were young men whom she liked much better; and if they had only come forward and presented their claims to favour, she would have declined the offer. But time was rapidly passing away. Anna was ambitious of being engaged before she was sixteen, and married, if possible. Her mother had rejected two offers, and she was anxious to do as much. Here was a chance for one rejection—but was she sure of another offer in time? No! There was the difficulty. For some days she debated the question, and then laid it before her mother. Mrs. Wyman consulted her husband, who did not much like Elliott; but the mother felt the necessity of an

early marriage, and overruled all objections. Her advice to Anna was to accept the offer, and it was accepted accordingly.

A fond, wayward child of sixteen may chance to marry and do well, spite of all the drawbacks she will meet; but this is only in case she happen to marry a man of good sense, warm affections, and great kindness, who can bear with her as a father bears with a capricious child; can forgive much and love much. But give the happiness of such a creature into the keeping of a cold, narrow-minded, selfish, petulant man, and her cup will soon run over. Bitter, indeed, will be her lot in life.

Just such a man was Thomas Elliott. He had sought only his own pleasures, and had owned no law but his own will. For more than ten years he had been living without other external restraints than those social laws that all must observe who desire to keep a fair reputation. He came in when he pleased and went out when he pleased. He required service from all, and gave it to none—that is, so far as he needed service, he exacted it from those under him, but was not in the habit of making personal sacrifices for the sake of others. Thus, his natural selfishness was confirmed. When he married, it was with an end to the good he should derive from the union—not from a generous desire to make another happy in himself. Anna was young, vivacious, and more than ordinarily intelligent and pretty. There was much about her that was attractive, and Elliott really imagined that he loved her; but it was himself that he loved in her fascinating qualities. These were

all to minister to his pleasure. He never once thought of devoting himself to her happiness.

On the night of the wedding, which took place soon after Anna's sixteenth birthday, the bride was in that bewildered state of mind which destroys all the rational perceptions of the mind. Her whole soul was in a pleasing tumult, and yet she did not feel happy; and why? Spite of the solemn promise she had made to love and honour her husband above all men, she felt that there were others whom she could have loved and honoured more than him, were they in his place. But this, reason told her, was folly. They had not presented themselves, and he had. They could be nothing to her—he must be every thing. To secure a husband early was the great point, and that had been gained. This thought, whenever it crossed her mind, would cause her to look around upon her maiden companions with proud self-complacency. They were still upon the shores of expectancy. She had launched her boat upon the sunny sea of matrimony, and was already moving steadily away under a pleasant breeze.

Alas! young bride, thy hymeneal altar is an altar of sacrifice. Love is not the deity who is presiding there. Little do they dream who have led thee, poor lamb! garlanded with flowers, to that altar, how innocent, how true, how good a heart they were offering up upon its strange fires. But they will know in time, and thou wilt know when it is too late.

Two years from the period of their marriage, Elliott and his wife were seated in a small room moderately well furnished. He was leaning back in

a chair, with arms folded, and his chin resting on his bosom. His face was contracted into a gloomy scowl. Anna, who looked pale and troubled, was sewing and touching with her foot a cradle, in which was a babe. The little one seemed restless. Every now and then it would start and moan, or cry out. After a time it awoke and commenced screaming. The mother lifted it from the cradle and tried to hush it upon her bosom, but the babe still cried on. It was evidently in pain.

"Confound you! why don't you keep that child quiet?" exclaimed the husband, impatiently casting at the same time an angry look upon his wife.

Anna made no reply, but turned half away from him, evidently to conceal the tears that suddenly started from her eyes, and strove more earnestly to quiet the child. In this she soon succeeded.

"I believe you let her cry on purpose, whenever I am in the house, just to annoy me," her husband resumed in an ill-natured tone.

"No, Thomas, you know that I do not," Anna said.

"Say I lie, why don't you?"

"Oh, Thomas, how can you speak so to me?" And his young wife turned toward him an earnest, tearful look.

"Pah! don't try to melt me with your crying. I never believed in it. Women can cry at any moment."

There was a convulsive motion of Mrs. Elliott's head as she turned quickly away, and a choking sound in her throat. She remained silent, ten minutes passed, when her husband said in a firm voice,

"Anna, I'm going to break up."

Mrs. Elliott glanced around with a startled air.

"It's true, just what I say—your father may think that I'm going to make a slave of myself to support you, but he's mistaken. He's refused to help me in my business one single copper, though he's able enough. And now I've taken my resolution. You can go back to him as quick as you like."

Before the brutal husband had half finished the sentence, his wife was on her feet, with a cheek deadly pale, and eyes almost starting from her head. Thomas Elliott was her husband and the father of her babe, and as such she had loved him with a far deeper love than he had deserved. This had caused her to bear with coldness and neglect, and even positive unkindness without a complaint. Sacredly had she kept from her mother even a hint of the truth. Thus had she gone on almost from the first; for only a few months elapsed before she discovered that her image was dim on her husband's heart.

"You needn't stand there staring at me like one moon-struck"—he said, with bitter sarcasm and a curl of the lip. "What I say is the truth. I'm going to give up, and you've got to go home to them that are more able to support you than I am; and who have a better right, too, I'm thinking."

There was something so heartless and chilling in the words and manner of her husband, that Mrs. Elliott made no attempt to reply. Covering her face with her hands, she sunk back into the chair from which she had risen, more deeply miserable than she had ever been in her life. From this state she was aroused by the imperative question,

"Anna, what do you intend doing?"

"That is for you to say"—was her murmured reply.

"Then, I say, go home to your father, and at once."

Without a word the wife rose from her chair, with her infant in her arms, and pausing only long enough to put on her shawl and bonnet, left the house.

Mr. and Mrs. Wyman were sitting alone late on the afternoon of the same day, thinking about and conversing of their child. Neither of them felt too well satisfied with the result of her marriage. It required not even the close observation of a parent's eye, to discover that she was far from happy.

"I wish she were only single"—Mr. Wyman at length said. "She married much too young—only eighteen now, and with a cold-hearted and, I fear, unprincipled and neglectful husband. It is sad to think of it."

"But I was married as young as she was, Mr. Wyman?"

"Yes; but I flatter myself you made a better choice. Your condition at eighteen was very different from what hers is now. As I said before, I only wish she were single, and then I wouldn't care to see her married for two or three years to come."

"I can't help wishing she had refused Mr. Elliott. If she had done so, she might have been married to a much better man long before this. Mr. Carpenter is worth a dozen of him. Oh dear! this marriage is all a lottery, after all. Few prizes and many blanks. Poor Anna! she is not happy."

At this moment the door opened, and the child of whom they were speaking, with her infant in her

arms, came hurriedly in. Her face was deadly pale, her lips tightly compressed, and her eyes widely distended and fixed.

"Anna!" exclaimed the mother, starting up quickly and springing toward her.

"My child, what ails you?" was eagerly asked by the father, as he, too, rose up hastily.

But there was no reply. The heart of the child was too full. She could not utter the truth. She had been sent back to her parents by her husband, but her tongue could not declare that! Pride, shame, wounded affections, combined to hold back her words. Her only reply was to lay her babe in her mother's arms, and then fling herself upon the bosom of her father.

All was mystery then, but time soon unveiled the cause of their daughter's strange and sudden appearance, and her deep anguish. The truth gradually came out that she had been deserted by her husband; or, what seemed to Mrs. Wyman more disgraceful still, had been sent home by him. Bitterly did she execrate him, but it availed nothing. Her ardent wish had been gratified. Anna was engaged at sixteen, and married soon after; but at eighteen, alas! she had come home a deserted wife and mother! And so she remained. Her husband never afterward came near her. And now, at thirty, with a daughter well grown, she remains in her father's house, a quiet, thoughtful, dreamy woman, who sees little in life that is attractive, and who rarely stirs beyond the threshold of the house that shelters her. There are those who will recognise this picture

So much for being engaged at sixteen!

THE DAUGHTER.

It often happens that a daughter possesses greatly superior advantages to those enjoyed, in early years, by either her father or mother. She is not compelled to labour as hard as they were obliged to labour when young; and she is blessed with the means of education far beyond what they had. Her associations, too, are of a different order, all tending to elevate her views of life, to refine her tastes, and to give her admission into a higher grade of society than they were fitted to move in.

Unless very watchful of herself and very thoughtful of her parents, a daughter so situated will be led at times to draw comparisons between her own cultivated intellect and taste and the want of such cultivation in her parents, and to think indifferently of them, as really inferior, because not so well educated and accomplished as she is. A distrust of their judgment and a disrespect of their opinions will follow, as a natural consequence, if these thoughts and feelings be indulged. This result often takes place with thoughtless, weak-minded girls; and is followed by what is worse, a disregard to their feelings, wishes, and express commands.

A sensible daughter, who loves her parents, will hardly forget to whom she is indebted for all the superior advantages she enjoys. She will also readily perceive that the experience which her parents have

acquired, and their natural strength of mind, give them a real and great superiority over her, and make their judgment, in all matters of life, far more to be depended upon than hers could possibly be. It may be that her mother has never learned to play upon the piano, has never been to a dancing-school, has never had any thing beyond the merest rudiments of an education; but she has good sense, prudence, industry, economy; understands and practises all the virtues of domestic life; has a clear, discriminating judgment; has been her husband's faithful friend and adviser for some twenty or thirty years; and has safely guarded and guided her children up to mature years. These evidences of a mother's title to her respect and fullest confidence cannot long be absent from a daughter's mind, and will prevent her acting in direct opposition to her judgment.

Thoughtless indeed must be that child who can permit an emotion of disrespect toward her parents to dwell in her bosom for more than a single moment!

Respect and love toward parents are absolutely necessary to the proper formation of the character upon that true basis which will bring into just order and subordination all the powers of the mind. Without this order and subordination there can be no true happiness. A child loves and respects his parents, because from them he derived his being, and from them receives every blessing and comfort. To them, and to them alone, does his mind turn as the authors of all the good gifts he possessed. As a mere child, it is right for him thus to regard his parents as the authors of his being and the originators of all his

blessings. But as reason gains strength, and he sees more deeply into the nature and causes of things, which only takes place as the child approaches the years of maturity, it is then seen that the parents were only the agents through which life, and all the blessings accompanying it, came from God, the great Father of all. If the parents have been loved with a truly filial love, then the mind has been suitably opened and prepared for love toward God, and an obedience to his divine laws, without which there can be no true happiness. When this new and higher truth takes possession of the child's mind, it in no way diminishes his respect for his earthly parents, but increases it. He no longer obeys them because they command obedience, but he regards the truth of their precepts, and in that truth hears the voice of God speaking to him. More than ever is he now careful to listen to their wise counsels, because he perceives in them the authority of reason, which is the authority of God.

Most young ladies, on attaining the age of responsibility, will perceive a difference in the manner of their parents. Instead of opposing them, as heretofore, with authority, they will oppose them with reason, where opposition is deemed necessary. The mother, instead of saying, when she disapproves any thing, "No, my child, you cannot do it;" or, "No, you must not go, dear;" will say, "I would rather not have you do so;" or, "I do not approve of your going." If you ask her reasons, she will state them, and endeavour to make you comprehend their force. It is far too often the case, that the daughter's desire to do what her mother disapproves is so active,

that neither her mother's objections nor reasons are strong enough to counteract her wishes, and she follows her own inclinations instead of being guided by her mother's better judgment. In these instances, she almost always does wrong, and suffers therefore either bodily or mental pain.

Obedience in childhood is that by which we are led and guided into right actions. When we become men and women, reason takes the place of obedience; but, like a young bird just fluttering from its nest, reason at first has not much strength of wing; and we should therefore suffer the reason of those who love us, like the mother-bird, to stoop under and bear us up in our earlier efforts, lest we fall bruised and wounded to the ground. To whose reason should a young girl look to strengthen her own, so soon as to her mother's, guided as it is by love? But it too often happens that, under the first impulses of conscious freedom, no voice is regarded but the voice of inclination and passion. The mother may oppose, and warn, and urge the most serious considerations, but the daughter turns a deaf ear to all. She thinks that she knows best.

"You are not going to-night, Mary?" said a mother, coming into her daughter's room, and finding her dressing for a ball. She had been rather seriously indisposed for some days, with a cold that had fallen upon her throat and chest, which was weak, but was now something better.

"I think I will, mother, for I am much better than I was yesterday, and have improved since morning. I have promised myself so much pleasure at this ball, that I cannot think of being disappointed."

The mother shook her head.

"Mary," she replied, "you are not well enough to go out. The air is damp, and you will inevitably take more cold. Think how badly your throat has been inflamed."

"I don't think it has been so *very* bad, mother."

"The doctor told me it was badly inflamed, and said you would have to be very careful of yourself, or it might prove serious."

"That was some days ago. It is a great deal better now."

"But the least exposure may cause it to return."

"I will be very careful not to expose myself. I will wrap up warm and go in a carriage. I am sure there is not the least danger, mother."

"While I am sure that there is very great danger. ou cannot pass from the door to the carriage without the damp air striking upon your face, and pressing into your lungs."

"But I must not always exclude myself from the air, mother. Air and exercise, you know, the doctor says, are indispensable to health."

"Dry, not damp air. This makes the difference. But you must act for yourself, Mary. You are now a woman, and must freely act in the light of that reason which God has given you. Because I love you, and desire your welfare, I thus seek to convince you that it is wrong to expose your health to-night. Your great desire to go blinds you to the real danger, which I can fully see."

"You are over-anxious, mother," urged Mary. "I know how I feel much better than you possibly can, and I know I am well enough to go."

"I have nothing more to say, my child," returned the mother. "I wish you to act freely, but wisely. Wisely I am sure you will not act if you go to-night. A temporary illness may not alone be the consequence; your health may receive a shock from which it will never recover."

"Mother wishes to frighten me," said Mary to herself, after her mother had left the room. "But I am not to be so easily frightened. I am sorry she makes such a serious matter about my going, for I never like to do any thing that is not agreeable to her feelings. But I must go to this ball. William is to call for me at eight, and he would be as much disappointed as myself if I were not to go. As to making more cold, what of that? I would willingly pay the penalty of a pretty severe cold rather than miss the ball."

Against all her mother's earnestly urged objections, Mary went with her lover to the ball. She came home, at one o'clock, with a sharp pain through her breast, red spots on her cheeks, oppression of the chest, and considerable fever. On the next morning she was unable to rise from her bed. When the doctor, who was sent for, came in, he looked grave, and asked if there had been any exposure by which a fresh cold could be taken.

"She was at the ball last night," replied the mother.

"Not with your approval, madam?" he said quickly, looking with a stern expression into the mother's face.

"No, doctor. I urged her not to go; but Mary thought she knew best. She did not believe there was any danger."

A strong expression rose to the doctor's lips, but he repressed it, lest he should needlessly alarm the patient. On retiring from her chamber, he declared the case to be a very critical one; and so it proved to be. Mary did not leave her room for some months; and when she did, it was with a constitution so impaired that she could not endure the slightest fatigue, nor bear the least exposure. Neither change of climate nor medicine availed any thing toward restoring her to health. In this feeble state she married, about twelve months afterward, the young man who had accompanied her to the ball. One year from the period at which that happy event took place, she died, leaving to stranger hands a babe that needed all her tenderest care, and a husband almost broken-hearted at his loss.

This is not merely a picture from the imagination, and highly coloured. It is from nature, and every line is drawn with the pencil of truth. Hundreds of young women yearly sink into the grave, whose friends can trace to some similar act of imprudence, committed in direct opposition to the earnest persuasions of parents or friends, the cause of their premature decay and death. And too often other, and sometimes even worse, consequences than death, follow a disregard of the mother's voice of warning.

PASSING AWAY.

[From our story of "The Two Brides," we take a scene, in which some one sorrowing as those without hope may find words of consolation.]

In the very springtime of young womanhood, the destroyer had come; and though he laid his hand upon her gently at first, yet the touch was none the less fatal. But, while her frail body wasted, her spirit remained peaceful. As the sun of her natural life sunk low in the sky, the bright auroral precursor of another day smiled along the eastern verge of her spiritual horizon. There was in her heart neither doubt, nor fear, nor shrinking.

"Dear Marion!" said Anna, dropping a tear upon her white transparent hand, as she pressed it to her lips, a few weeks after the alarming hemorrhage just mentioned; "how can you look at this event so calmly?"

They had been speaking of death, and Marion had alluded to its approach to Anna, with a strange cheerfulness, as if she felt it to be nothing more than a journey to another and far pleasanter land than that wherein she now dwelt.

"Why should I look upon this change with other than tranquil feelings?" she asked.

"Why? How can you ask such a question, sister?" returned Anna. "To me, there has been

always something in the thought of death that made the blood run cold about my heart."

"This," replied Marion, with one of her sweet smiles, "is because your ideas of death have been, from the first, confused and erroneous. You thought of the cold and pulseless body; the pale winding-sheet; the narrow coffin, and the deep, dark grave. But, I do not let my thoughts rest on these. To me, death involves the idea of eternal life. I cannot think of the one without the other. Should the chrysalis tremble at the coming change?—the dull worm in its cerements shrink from the moment when, ordained by nature, it must rise into a new life, and expand its wings in the sunny air? How much less cause have I to tremble and shrink back as the hour approaches when this mortal is to put on immortality?"

"Yours is a beautiful faith," said Anna. "And its effects, as seen now that the hour from which all shrink approaches, are strongly corroborative of its truth."

"It is beautiful because it is true," replied Marion. "There is no real beauty that is not the form of something good and true."

"If I were as good as you, I might not shrink from death," remarked Anna, with a transient sigh.

"I hope you are better than I am, dear; and think you are," said Marion.

"Oh, no!" quickly returned Anna.

"Do you purpose evil in your heart?" asked Marion, seriously.

Anna seemed half surprised at the question.

"Evil! Evil! I hope not," she replied, as a shadow came over her face.

"It is an evil purpose only that should make us fear death, Anna; for therein lies the only cause of fear. Death, to those who love themselves and the world above every thing else, is a sad event; but to those who love God and their neighbour supremely, it is a happy change."

"That is all true," said Anna. "My reason assents to it. But, in the act of dissolution—in that mortal strife, when the soul separates itself from the body—there is something from which my heart shrinks and trembles down fainting in my bosom. Ah! In the crossing of that bourne from which no traveller has returned to tell us of what is beyond, there is something that more than half appals me."

"There is much that takes away the fear you have mentioned," replied Marion. "It is the uncertain that causes us to tremble and shrink back. But, when we know what is before us, we prepare ourselves to meet it. Attendant upon every one who dies, says a certain writer, are two angels, who keep his mind entirely above the thought of death, and in the idea of eternal life. They remain with him through the whole process—protecting him from evil spirits—and receive him into the world of spirits after his soul has fully withdrawn itself from the interior of the body. The last idea active in the mind of the person before death, is the first idea in his mind after death, when his consciousness of life is restored; and it is some time after this conscious life returns before he is aware that he is dead. Around him he sees objects similar to those seen in the natural

world. There are houses and trees, streams of water and gardens. Men and women dressed in variously fashioned garments. They walk and converse together, as we do upon earth. When, at length, he is told that he has died, and is now in a world that is spiritual instead of natural—that the body in which he is, is a body formed of spiritual instead of natural substances, he is in a measure affected with surprise, and for the most part a pleasing surprise. He wonders at the grossness of his previous ideas, which limited form and substances to material things; and now, unless he had been instructed during his life in the world, begins to comprehend the truth that man is a man from the spirit, not from the body."

Anna, who had been listening intently, drew a long breath, as Marion paused.

"Dead, and yet not know the fact!" said she, with an expression of wonder. "It seems incredible. And all this you fully believe?"

"Yes, Anna; as entirely as I believe in the existence of the sun in the firmament."

"If these doctrines can take away the fear of death, which so haunts the mind of even those who are striving to live pure lives, they are indeed a legacy of good to the world. Oh, Marion, how much I have suffered, ever since the days of my childhood, from this dreadful fear!"

"They do take away the fear of death," returned Marion; "because they remove the uncertainty which has heretofore gathered like a gloomy pall over the last hours of mortality. When the soul of lover or friend passed from this world, it seemed to plunge into a dark profound, and there came not back an

echo to tell of his fate. 'The bourne from which no traveller returns!' Oh! the painful eloquence of that single line. But, now, we who receive the doctrine of which I speak, can look beyond this bourne; and though the traveller returns not, yet we know something of how he fared on his entrance into the new country."

"Then we need not fear for you," said Anna, tenderly, "when you are called to pass this bourne?"

"No, sister," replied Marion, "I know in whom I have believed, and I feel sure that it will be well with me, so far as I have shunned what is evil and sought to do good. Do not think of me as sinking into some gloomy profound; or awakening from my sleep of death, startled, amazed, or shocked by the sudden transition. Loving angels will be my companions as I descend into the valley and the shadow of death; and I will fear no evil. Upon the other side I will be received among those who have gone before, and I will scarcely feel that there has been a change. A little while I will remain there, and then pass upward to my place in heaven."

The mother of Marion entered her room at this moment, and the conversation was suspended. But it was renewed again soon after, and the gentle-hearted, spiritual-minded girl continued to talk of the other world as one preparing for a journey talks about the new country into which he is about going, and of whose geography, and the manners and customs of whose people, he has made himself conversant from books.

Not long did she remain on this side of the dark valley, through which she was to pass. A few months

wound up the story of her earthly life, and she went peacefully and confidently on her way to her eternal dwelling-place. It was a sweet, sad time, when the parting hour came, and the mother, brother, and dearly loved adopted sister, gathered around Marion's bed to see her die. That angels were present, each one felt; for the sphere of tranquillity that pervaded the hearts of all was the sphere of heaven.

"God is love," said Marion, a short time before she passed away. She was holding the hand of her mother, and looking tenderly in her face. "How exquisite is my perception of this truth? It comes upon me with a power that subdues my spirit, yet fills it with ineffable peace. With what a wondrous love has he regarded us! I never had had so intense a perception of this as now."

Marion closed her eyes, and for some time lay silent, while a heavenly smile irradiated her features. Then looking up, she said, and as she spoke she took the hand of Anna and placed it within that of her mother—

"When I am gone, let the earthly love you bore me, mother, be added to that already felt for our dear Anna. Think of me as an angel, and of her as your child."

In spite of her effort to restrain them, tears gushed from the eyes of Mrs. Lee, and fell like rain over her cheeks. For a short time she bent to her dying one, and clasped her wildly to her bosom. But the calmness of a deeply-laid trust in Providence was soon restored to her spirit, and she said, speaking of Anna—

"Without her, how could we part with you? I do not think I could bear it."

"I shall go before you only a little while," returned Marion, "only a very little while. A few years—how quickly they will hurry by! A few more days of labour, and your earthly tasks will be done. Then we shall meet again. And even in the days of our separation we shall not be far removed from each other. Thought will bring us spiritually near, and affection conjoin us, even though no sense of the body give token of proximity. And who knows but to me will be assigned the guardianship of the dear babe given to us by Anna? Oh! if love will secure that holy duty, then it will be mine!"

A light, as if reflected from the sun of heaven, beamed from the countenance of Marion, who closed her eyes, and, in a little while, fell off into a gentle sleep. Silently did those who loved her with more than human tenderness—for there was in their affection a love of goodness for its own sake—bend over and watch the face of the sweet sleeper, even until there came stealing upon them the fear that she would not waken again in this world. And the fear was not groundless; for thus she passed away. To her death came as a gentle messenger, to bid her go up higher. And she obeyed the summons without a mortal fear.

No passionate grief at their loss raged wildly in the bosoms of those who suffered this great bereavement. For years, the mother and son had daily striven against selfish feelings as evil; and now, comprehending with the utmost clearness that Marion's removal was, for her, a blessed change, their

hearts were thankful, even while tears wet their cheeks. They mourned for her departure, because they were human; they suffered pain, for ties of love the most tender had been snapped asunder; they wept, because in weeping nature found relief. Yet, in all, peace brooded over their spirits.

When the fading, wasting form of earth which Marion's pure spirit had worn, as a garment, but now laid aside forever, was borne out, and consigned to its kindred clay, those who remained behind experienced no new emotions of grief. To them Marion still lived. This was the old mortal body, that vailed, rather than made visible, her real beauty. Now she was clothed in a spiritual body, that was transcendently beautiful, because it was the very form of good affections. To lay the useless garment aside was not, therefore, a painful task. This done, each member of the bereaved family returned to his and her life-tasks, and, in the faithful discharge of daily duties, found a sustaining power. But Marion was not lost to them. Ever present was she in their thought and affection, and often, in dreams, she was with them,—yet, never as the suffering mortal; but as the happy, glorified immortal. Beautiful was the faith upon which they leaned. To them the spiritual was not a something vague and undeterminate; but a real entity. They looked beyond the grave, into the spiritual world, as into a better country, where life was continued in higher perfection, and where were spiritual ultimates, as perfectly adapted to spiritual sense as are the ultimates of creation to the senses of the natural body.

THE LOVE SECRET.

"EDWARD is to be in London next week," said Mrs. Ravensworth; "and I trust, Edith, that you will meet him with the frankness he is entitled to receive."

Edith Hamilton, who stood behind the chair of her aunt, did not make any answer.

Mrs. Ravensworth continued—"Edward's father was your father's own brother. A man of nobler spirit never moved on English soil; and I hear that Edward is the worthy son of a worthy sire."

"If he were as pure and perfect as an angel, aunt," replied Edith, "it would be all the same to me. I have never seen him, and cannot, therefore, meet him as one who has a right to claim my hand."

"Your father gave you away when you were a child, Edith; and Edward comes now to claim you by virtue of this betrothal."

"While I love the memory of my father, and honour him as a child should honour a parent," said Edith, with much seriousness, "I do not admit his right to give me away in marriage while I was yet a child. And, moreover, I do not think the man who would seek to consummate such a marriage contract worthy of any maiden's love. Only the heart that yields a free consent is worth having, and the man who would take any other is utterly unworthy of

any woman's regard. By this rule I judge Edwar to be unworthy, no matter what his father may have been."

"Then you mean," said Mrs. Ravensworth, "deliberately to violate the solemn contract made by your father with the father of Edward?"

"I cannot receive Edward as any thing but a stranger," replied Edith. "It will not mend the error of my father for me to commit a still greater one."

"How commit a still greater one?" inquired Mrs. Ravensworth.

"Destroy the very foundation of a true marriage —freedom of choice and consent. There would be no freedom of choice on his part, and no privilege of consent on mine. Happiness could not follow such a union, and to enter into it would be doing a great wrong. No, aunt, I cannot receive Edward in any other way than as a stranger—for such he is."

"There is a clause in your father's will that you may have forgotten, Edith," said her aunt.

"That which makes me penniless if I do not marry Edward Hamden?"

"Yes."

"No—I have not forgotten it, aunt."

"And you mean to brave that consequence?"

"In a choice of evils we always take the least." Edith's voice trembled.

Mrs. Ravensworth did not reply for some moments. While she sat silent, the half-closed door near which Edith stood, and toward which her aunt's back was turned, softly opened, and a handsome youth, between whom and Edith glances of intelli-

gence instantly passed, presented the startled maiden with a beautiful white rose, and then noiselessly retired.

It was nearly a minute before Mrs. Ravensworth resumed the light employment in which she was engaged, and as she did so, she said—

"Many a foolish young girl gets her head turned with those gay gallants at our fashionable watering-places, and imagines that she has won a heart when the object of her vain regard never felt the throb of a truly unselfish and noble impulse."

The crimson deepened on Edith's cheeks and brow, and as she lifted her eyes, she saw herself in a large mirror opposite, with her aunt's calm eyes steadily fixed upon her. To turn her face partly away, so that it could no longer be reflected from the mirror, was the work of an instant. In a few moments she said—

"Let young and foolish girls get their heads turned if they will. But I trust I am in no danger."

"I am not so sure of that. Those who think themselves most secure are generally in the greatest danger. Who is the youth with whom you danced last evening? I don't remember to have seen him here before."

"His name is Evelyn." There was a slight tremor in Edith's voice.

"How came you to know him?"

"I met him here last season."

"You did?"

"Yes, ma'am. And I danced with him last night. Was there any harm in that?" The maiden's voice had regained its firmness.

"I didn't say there was," returned Mrs. Ravensworth, who again relapsed into silence. Not long after, she said—"I think we will return to London on Thursday."

"So soon!" Edith spoke in a disappointed voice.

"Do you find it so very pleasant here?" said the aunt, a little ironically.

"I have not complained of its being dull, aunt," replied Edith. "But if you wish to return on Thursday, I will be ready to accompany you."

Soon after this, Edith Hamilton left her aunt's room, and went to one of the drawing-rooms of the hotel at which they were staying, where she sat down near a recess window that overlooked a beautiful promenade. She had been here only a few minutes, when she was joined by a handsome youth. to whom Edith said—

"How could you venture to the door of my aunt's parlour? I'm half afraid she detected your presence, for she said, immediately afterward, that we would return to London on the day after to-morrow."

"So soon? Well, I'll be there next week, and it will be strange if, with your consent, we don't meet often."

"Edward Hamden is expected in a few days," replied Edith, her voice slightly faltering.

Her companion looked at her searchingly for a few moments, and then said—

"You have never met him?"

"Never."

"But when you do meet him, the repugnance you now feel may instantly vanish."

A shadow passed over Edith's face, and she

answered in a voice that showed the remark—the tone of which conveyed more than the words themselves—to have been felt as a question of her constancy.

"Can one whose heart is all unknown to me, one who must think of me with a feeling of dislike because of bonds and pledges, prove a nearer or a dearer friend than——"

Edith did not finish the sentence. But that was not needed. The glance of rebuking tenderness cast upon her companion expressed all that her lips had failed to utter.

"But you do not know me, Edith," said the young man.

"My heart says differently," was Edith's lowly spoken reply.

Evelyn pressed the maiden's hand, and looked into her face with an earnest, loving expression.

Mrs. Ravensworth, to whose care Edith had been consigned on the death of her father, had never been pleased with the unwise contract made by the parents of her niece and Edward Hamden. The latter had been for ten years in Paris and Italy, travelling and pursuing his studies. These being completed, in obedience to the will of a deceased parent, he was about returning to London to meet his future wife. No correspondence had taken place between the parties to this unnatural contract; and from the time of Edward's letter, when he announced to Mrs. Ravensworth his proposed visit, it was plain that his feelings were as little interested in his future partner as were hers in him.

During the two or three days that Mrs. Ravens-

worth and her niece remained at the watering-place, Edith and young Evelyn met frequently; but, as far as possible, at times when they supposed the particular attention of the aunt would not be drawn toward them in such a manner as to penetrate their love secret. When, at length, they parted, it was with an understanding that they were to meet in London.

On returning to the city, the thoughts of Edith reverted more directly to the fact of Edward Hamden's approaching visit; and, in spite of all her efforts to remain undisturbed in her feelings, the near approach of this event agitated her. Mrs. Ravensworth frequently alluded to the subject, and earnestly pressed upon Edith the consideration of her duty to her parent, as well as the consequences that must follow her disregard of the contract which had been made. But the more she talked on this subject, the more firm was Edith in expressing her determination not to do violence to her feelings in a matter so vital to her happiness.

The day at length came upon which Edward Hamden was to arrive. Edith appeared, in the morning, with a disturbed air. It was plain to the closely observing eyes of her aunt, that she had not passed a night of refreshing sleep.

"I trust, my dear niece," she said, after they had retired from the breakfast table, where but little food had been taken, "that you will not exhibit toward Edward, on meeting him, any of the preconceived and unjust antipathy you entertain. Let your feelings, at least, remain uncommitted for or against him.

"Aunt Helen, it is useless to talk to me in this

way," Edith replied, with more than her usual warmth. "The simple fact of an obligation to love puts a gulf between us. My heart turns from him as from an enemy. I will meet him with politeness; but it must be cold and formal. To ask of me more, is to ask what I cannot give. I only wish that he possessed the manliness I would have had if similarly situated. Were this so, I would now be free by his act, not my own."

Seeing that all she urged but made the feelings of Edith oppose themselves more strongly to the young man, Mrs. Ravensworth ceased to speak upon the subject, and the former was left to brood with a deeply disturbed heart over the approaching interview with one who had come to claim a hand that she resolutely determined not to yield.

About twelve o'clock, Mrs. Ravensworth came to Edith's room and announced the arrival of Edward Hamden. The maiden's face became pale, and her lips quivered.

"If I could but be spared an interview," she murmured. "But that is more than I can ask."

"How weak you are, Edith," replied her aunt, in a tone of reproof.

"I will join you in the drawing-room in half an hour," said Edith, speaking more calmly.

Mrs. Ravensworth retired, and left Edith again to her own thoughts. She sat for nearly the whole of the time she had mentioned. Then rising hurriedly, she made a few changes in her attire; after which she descended to the drawing-room with a step that was far from being firm.

So noiselessly did she enter the apartment where

Hamden awaited her, that neither her aunt nor the young man perceived her presence for some moments, and she had time to examine his appearance, and to read the lineaments of his half-averted face. While she stood thus observing him, her countenance suddenly flushed, and she bent forward with a look of surprise and eagerness. At this moment the young man became aware that she had entered, and rising up quickly, advanced to meet her.

"Evelyn!" exclaimed Edith, striking her hands together, the moment he turned toward her.

"Edith! my own Edith!" returned the young man, as he grasped her hand, and ventured a warm kiss on her beautiful lips. "Not Evelyn, but Hamden. Our parents betrothed us while we were yet too young to give or withhold consent. Both, as we grew older, felt this pledge as a heart-sickening constraint. But we met as strangers, and I saw that you were all my soul could desire. I sought your regard and won it. No obligation but love now binds us."

The young man then turned to Mrs. Ravensworth, and said—

"You see, madam, that we are not strangers."

Instead of looking surprised, Mrs. Ravensworth smiled calmly, and answered—

"No—it would be singular if you were. Love-tokens don't generally pass, nor familiar meetings take place between strangers."

"Love-tokens, Aunt Helen?" fell from the lips of Edith, as she turned partly away from Hamden, and looked inquiringly at her relative.

"Yes, dear," returned Mrs. Ravensworth. "White

roses, for instance. You saw your own blushing face in the mirror, did you not?"

"The mirror! Then you saw Edward present the rose?"

"And did you know me?" inquired the young man.

"One who knew your father as well as I did could not fail to know the son. I penetrated your love secret as soon as it was known to yourselves."

"Aunt Helen!" exclaimed Edith, hiding her face on the neck of her kind relative, "how have I been deceived!"

"Happily, I trust, love," returned Mrs. Ravensworth, tenderly.

"Most happily! My heart swells with gladness almost to bursting," came murmuring from the lips of the joyful maiden.

THE END.

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